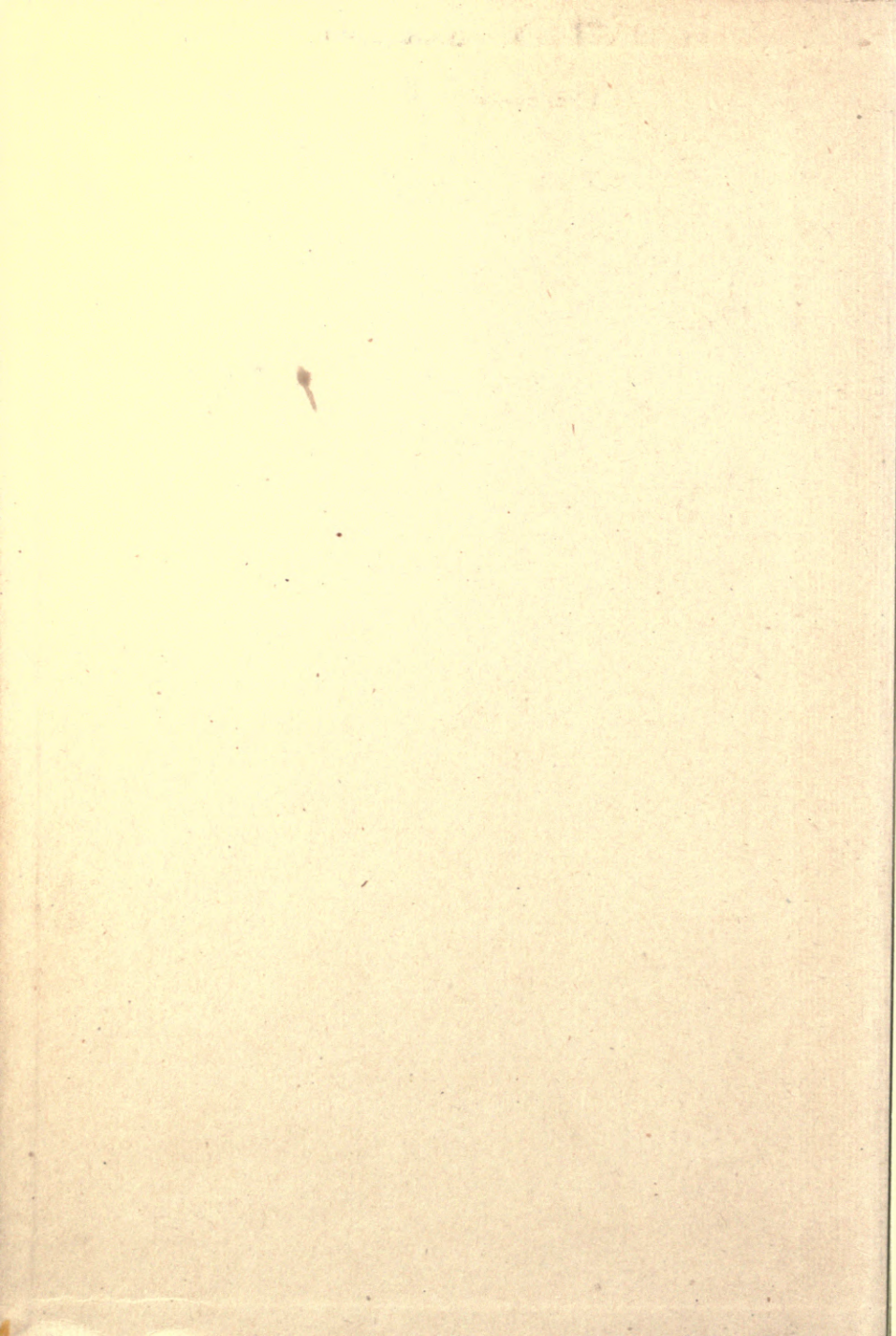


VIVIAN *of*  
MACKINAC



WILLIAM C. LEVERE



Robert V. Sraide,

Begun at Mackinac Island  
Sept 15, 1913.

Completed Sept. 19, 1913.

And if William C. Severe doesn't  
do better in his next books, he'll  
never become immortal.

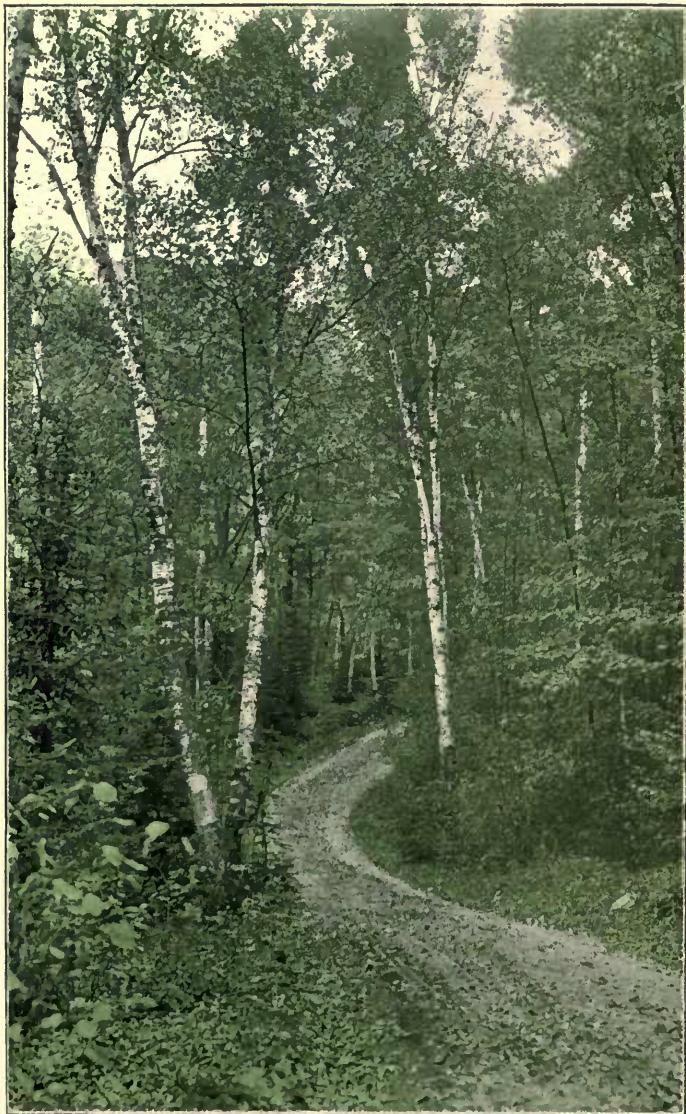
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VIVIAN OF MACKINAC







VIVIAN'S PATH



# VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

BY  
WILLIAM C. LEVERE



CHICAGO  
FORBES & COMPANY  
1911

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AN ISLAND GIRL



# VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

## CHAPTER I

### AN ISLAND GIRL

VIVIAN lay on the crest of the cliff, listening to the murmur of the waters and the whisperings in the tree tops. In the straits, the breezes were gathering while the waves below were striking the shore with a sting in their blow. On the bit of the island beneath her, separating the cliff from the beach, the foliage of the trees was quivering with life. Wandering clouds here and there set off the beauty of the blue sky, though the waters were radiant and sparkling, for the face of the sun was uncovered.

How this girl of eighteen loved it all. As far back as she could remember, from the very

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

beginning of her life, she had been clambering up the narrow, precipitous path to this cliff, and enthroned here, had given herself to the inspiration of the ever changing scene. Vivian had learned the language of the waves and of the winds in the trees. They brought her strange messages from the faraway world she had never seen, the world of which she loved to dream and wonder whether she would ever see. Two miles away, on the road to the British Landing, was the old farmhouse which had been her birthplace. She had never known any home but this, and if she sometimes wished to see the marvelous sights in the great cities to the south, it was but a brief ambition, for here in the little island she found her heart content.

From her lofty cliff, she could see the little village as it stretched a mile away at the base of Mackinac. She seldom ventured there. Her tasks at home completed, she knew peace when she came through the trees that lined the old road to the rugged peak that lifted its head



## AN ISLAND GIRL

above the waters and shore,—the soft odor of the balsams and cedars soothed her spirit.

Vivian Summers was a dreamer. The few books in the farmhouse were the romantic tales of the great Scotch wizard, and these she had read again and again. They had furnished food for her delicate imagination and she reweave them with the strange stories the waves sung to her as she listened from the cliff. But she found her hero in none of the knights of olden story. This lofty place was reserved for her big, handsome, generous brother, Tom. To Vivian, no one was quite so close as this fine, browned, manly fellow. For him and her father and mother her heart was full of affection, even though none of them could ever quite understand her love of solitude or the vivid fancy of which they at times saw flashes. The father and the mother were reserved, contained people without the emotional qualities that characterized their children.

The stalwart young fellow, far from shared

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

the quiet spirit that possessed his sister. His work finished, he was away to the village where at every entertainment he was the center of attraction, his merry, contagious laugh reaching out and gathering all within hearing in its irresistible grasp. His friends declared him the personification of good fellowship; and he, with his love of the crowd, never pretended to fathom why his beloved sister chose the cliff and the woods of the island instead of the company of the gay, young people at the foot of the hill. He would smooth back her hair, so full of the yellow which the sun beat upon it, and call her his island gypsy. "It is lucky," he would say, "that there is no island bandit, for he certainly would search out your solitary haunts and then where would my blue-eyed little sister be?" And laughing he would add, "Go back to your dreaming, for if you venture below the men of the island will steal you from me, my own true lady love," and then he would kiss her and hurry away. Tom had been like

## AN ISLAND GIRL

this all her life. No wonder she fancied him as one with the spirit of the knights of old.

It was of Tom that Vivian was thinking to-day. Her mind refused to run in the usual channel. Of late stories had come to the top of the hill of his infatuation for a girl of the village. This girl was a stranger to the island and little was known of her or of her father, who had come here with her less than a year before. The father, Louis Manette, had rented a small farm near the old Mission House and with his daughter had become part of the life of the village. They had not been on the island long when a Jim Hester appeared and Manette hired him as a helper, though the islanders, busy with the details of their neighbors' affairs, as small communities are wont to be, could scarcely understand why he should need an assistant to help cultivate his few acres. Manette did not attempt to satisfy current curiosity and little could be gleaned by the most inquisitive. It was evident to those who knew

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

the type that Manette was a French-Canadian; and aside from the fact that he condescended to announce he had come to the island principally for his health, he kept his lips closed.

Lettie Manette soon became a part of the social life of the little settlement. She inherited the dark beauty of her French ancestry and soon the young men were assiduous in their efforts to please. Mr. Manette was not slow to let it be known that this appreciation of his daughter was unwelcome, while she smiled on none until she met Tom. With him it was at once different. She received his attentions with a pleasure she did not try to conceal and this while her father fumed and forbade Tom the house. The news of this disturbed Vivian, who could not understand why any mortal should antagonize her brother.

Vivian now had a new cause for alarm. Early in the day there had come from the village, the story of a conflict between Louis Manette and her brother. Soon after Tom had

## AN ISLAND GIRL

reached the dock where he had gone in the morning, he had been approached by Manette, who was plainly resolved on making trouble. Tom had every reason in the world to avoid anything like this with the man and at first tried to conciliate him with fair speech. Manette was not to be put off by kind words and persisted in his offensive behavior. Tom would not be provoked and turned away. As he strode along the dock, he heard a hurried step coming after him, and then a cry from those about him, which was so full of warning, that it could not be disregarded. He turned quickly, to find Louis Manette almost upon him, a vicious looking knife in his hand.

Tom sprang to one side just as the knife which his enemy held quivering above him descended with a wicked thrust. The younger man's eyes blazed with anger, and grasping Manette by his knife arm, he demanded, "Would you kill me? Are you beside yourself? I could throw you into the lake with a

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

twist of my wrist, and it looks as if you needed the water to cool your hot blood." He released his hold on Manette and motioned him away.

It needed more than the suggestion of water to cool his blood, for no sooner was the older man free, than he sprang again at Tom, the knife aimed at the heart. There was only one thing for the young islander to do. He knocked Manette down and wresting the knife from him, threw it into the lake. This was the tale the gossip had brought to the farmhouse.

As she thought of these things Vivian was possessed with a vague unrest. The surge of the waves on the shore was surcharged with unseen disaster. The whisperings in the tree tops were unhappy in their portent. Vivian had loved a gray day on the lakes when the winds came driving the clouds before and the waves became sheets of lead, surmounted with hoar frost. Somehow this was different. The dirge of the waters was an echo of the uneasi-

## AN ISLAND GIRL

ness in her breast that grew as the groaning mid the trees took on strength. A cloud had passed across the face of the sun. In the north a breeze had sprung up and the moaning in the foliage grew louder. She understood the language of them all but never in her life before had they spoken to her like this. Her heart grew heavy as she listened. A longing for the old music of the leaves seized her, but the storm in the valley below only grew louder. She strained her eyes and when there appeared a tiny speck clambering laboriously up the side of the brown hill that stretched from the hillside down to the Mission House, she sprang to her feet and held her heart.

The little black dot was struggling up the steep as if in desperate haste. As the minutes passed it took the form of a man. He at last reached the road on the hill and was then hid from sight by the trees. It was Tom, she was sure of it. Almost leaping down the narrow pathway, she sprang to the road and found him

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

still coming on in mad haste. He reached her, panting with his exertion, his face black with despair, his eyes eager with the spirit of flight. Vivian threw her arms around him crying, "Tom, Tom."

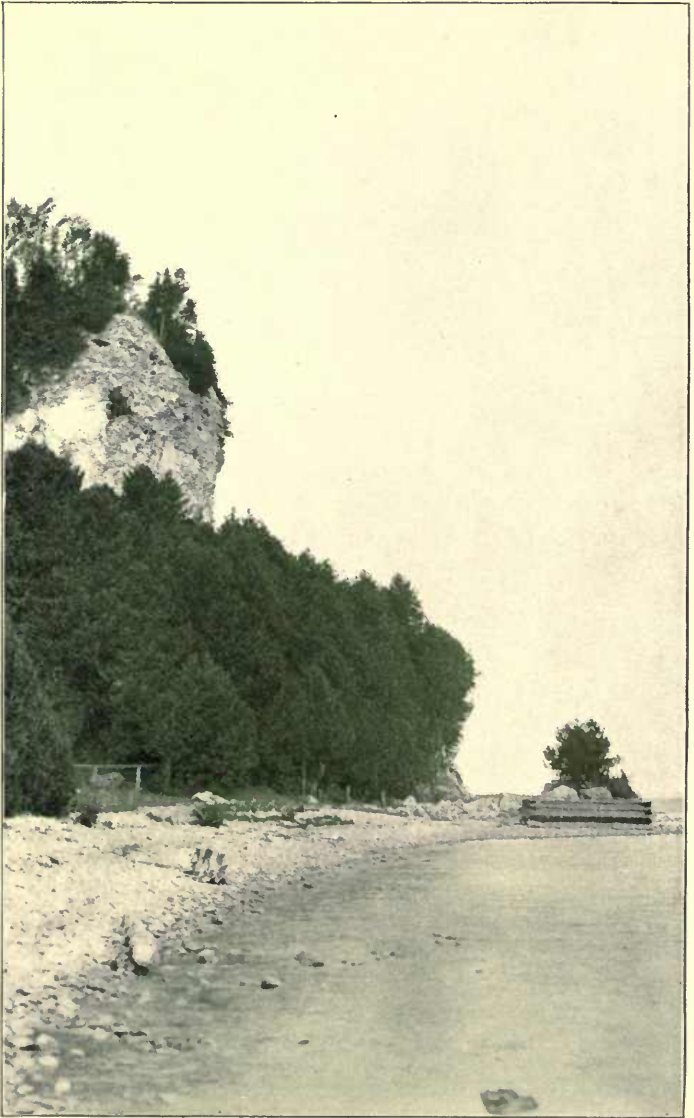
"Vivian," he said, and he held her at arm's length looking down into her soul, his eyes speaking his agony, "Vivian, I have killed Louis Manette!"



## THE ESCAPE







VIVIAN'S CLIFF

## CHAPTER II

### THE ESCAPE

**T**HOUGH Vivian heard the words of her brother as distinctly as she ever heard anything in her life she did not appear to grasp their meaning. She stood with Tom holding her at arm's length and looking down into her eyes, his form trembling with an unspeakable anguish.

“Vivian, do you hear?” and he shook her almost roughly, “Vivian, I have killed Louis Manette.”

He had no need to repeat his declaration. His first words had been going down into her soul, into the very depths of her being. She could feel the despair sink down, down, and it reached to every part of her and enveloped her soul in blackness. Just for a moment there

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

struggled a doubt. She would not, could not believe it; Tom had not done this, but his fearful eyes gave the lie to her hope and she knew the frightful thing was true. And with the realization, her first thought was not of how the deed had been done, nor anything about it but of her brother's safety. So she spoke eagerly, tremulously, "Tom, Tom, you must get away from here, you must get away."

"My God, Vivian," he cried, "I don't know what to do."

"Tom," she repeated with vehemence, "you must get away," and then she asked, "Does—does anybody know?"

"Not yet, but they will. It happened this way."

"There is no time to tell me how it happened. There is only time for one thing, and that for you to get away. Oh, what shall we do?" and the girl wrung her hands piteously.

"Yes, that is it, what to do," said Tom bitterly. "God, to think that I should ever have

## THE ESCAPE

the blood of another man on my hands and be a fugitive from the law. God!" He threw himself on the bank by the road and cried out the awful tears of a strong man. Vivian was beside him in an instant, her arms about him, and her voice quivering with a sympathy she could scarcely word, so deeply was she herself moved.

"O Tom, my Tom," she sobbed, "go away, go away."

"But where?" he cried.

"Somewhere, anywhere, oh, why has this trouble come?"

So intent had the brother and sister been that they had taken no note of the approach of a third party until he was upon them. The newcomer had come around a bend in the road from the top of the island. He was leading the horses that drew a rack heavily loaded with hay.

He looked with open-eyed wonder at the unusual sight and was exclaiming just as he was

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

seen, "Why, Tom, Vivian, what is the matter?" It was George Thorpe, who from boyhood had been Tom's fast friend and no coming could have been so welcome.

"Haven't you heard down in the village?" asked Tom.

"Heard? No, what is the matter?"

"I have killed Louis Manette."

Thorpe paled. "Tom, you don't mean that."

"Yes, I have killed him. Would to God it were not true."

Here Vivian broke in with an appeal to the young farmer who had been one of the few of Tom's friends she had known, "George, help us, help us get him away."

"Get away or not," interrupted Tom, "I must tell you how it happened. I do not want you to believe I meant to do it. God knows I did not. I must tell someone or I shall lose my mind."

Thorpe was deeply stirred and he said gently, "Well, Tom, tell us quickly, for if it is not



## THE ESCAPE

known in the village I suppose it soon will be and when we know your story we will know what is best to do."

Tom began, "You know of my love for Lettie Manette and my trouble with her father. That has been the talk of the island and I need not go into that. Well, after the trouble I had earlier in the morning, I made up my mind that I would go and see Manette and see if he wouldn't be reasonable. At least I hoped we might arrive at some understanding so that we would have no more public brawls. So I went to the house and there found Jim Hester, the hired man, who said that Manette was in the barn and that Lettie was with him. I thought that perhaps it would be well to have the talk with him when Lettie was present and went at once to the barn where I found him, but Lettie was not there. He was very much excited when I came upon him and I surmised had been having a quarrel with Lettie. I had scarcely reached the loft where he was

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

when he commenced to upbraid me in the most violent language and would not listen to a word I had to say. He stung me so that I replied in kind and almost before I knew it we were having a desperate struggle. Several blows had passed, when one that I gave him sent him staggering back, and before I could save him he fell through the trap in the floor and went to the floor below. Horror-stricken with what I had done I stood for a moment and thought I heard him scrambling to his feet and then I heard him with a groan fall back again. I ran to the loft ladder and, descending, found him dead on the floor. In his breast was a pitchfork that had pierced his heart. He must have fallen on it and it had killed him. Almost insane I rushed from the barn and came here as fast as I could come."

"But, Tom," said George, "this throws a new light on the case. It was an accident that killed him, not the fall."

"But I was responsible for the accident and

## THE ESCAPE

then who would believe me? Everybody knows of the trouble we had.”

Thorpe turned to Vivian, “What do you think Tom ought to do? Shall he stay and take his chances or shall he run away? You are his sister and I think your advice should have some weight with him.”

Vivian hesitated before she answered, “I have never had anything like this to decide before and I am afraid my advice will be mixed with my fears. The word you use, ‘chance,’ frightens me. I do not want Tom to take any ‘chance’ with injustice. I cannot advise. I must leave it all to him.”

Thorpe turned to Tom again. “Well, old fellow, it seems to be up to you. What do you say?”

Tom looked across the straits with unseeing eyes, or if they did see, it was some faraway haven of safety they visualized for him. He spoke heavily, “I have nothing to say that I have not said. I do not suppose there is a soul

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

in the village but knows of the attack he made on me early this morning. When his dead body is found in the barn where I was the last to see him alive, who will believe it was an accident? Who will take my word?"

"It does look bad, and the dock quarrel makes it worse. If you think best to get away, I will help you."

"My true friend!" cried Tom, embracing him, while Vivian looked a piteous joy at the offer of assistance.

"We must act quickly," added George. "In the first place Hester is likely to go to the barn and find the body and he is no friend of yours and will spread the news quickly. In fact, it is said that he only engaged himself to help Manette because he was your rival for the daughter's affections and wanted to be near her. Now, I'll tell you the very best thing to do. Get in under this load of hay. I am going over to St. Ignace and this is the safest way to carry you over. When the south bound even-

## THE ESCAPE

ing freight goes through St. Ignace, it stops at the crossing. It will be easy for you to jump it and go on to Chicago without being discovered. Once you are there, you must make plans for yourself but you will have a good start and I believe you can get away."

"But this will make trouble for you, George."

"Never mind me; you do as I tell you. I'll warrant to get you through, and more than that, they will never know I had anything to do with it. Come, get under the hay and we'll get a good start on them, anyway."

Tom took his sister in his arms and held her for a moment. Vivian tried to be brave, realizing that her brother needed all the encouragement she could give him, but the tears would well up and at last she gave way and crying bitterly, let all her weight rest against him. George plucked him by the sleeve. He placed his sister on the bank and leaping upon the rack crawled beneath the hay. He would have said

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

good-by, but the words choked him. His friend took the reins and drove on. Vivian looked dumbly after the wagon as it drew farther away and when it had disappeared in the distance, she threw herself on the grassy mound and cried out the first deep sorrow of her heart.

IN THE HANDS OF THE LAW









THE ISLAND DRIVE

## CHAPTER III

### IN THE HANDS OF THE LAW

**I**N after years, Vivian never could recall the incidents of her journey from the edge of the island to the farmhouse on the road to the British Landing. She could not even remember when she arose and started for home. In a vague way, she could recollect the turmoil and misery that existed in her mind, but she had given no thought to the familiar objects of the road she had so often traversed. Its trees, bushes, rocks, pathways and flowers were less than a mere mass of color to her, they were not there as far as she knew. Her light feet almost flew as she hurried on, panting for breath, a fitful sob escaping her compressed lips every now and then, her hands clutching her bosom

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

in sore distraction, as if seeking to soothe the pain that was welling up in her heart.

Poor Vivian, her life had been so free from care and sorrow, and now both had come so suddenly, so unexpectedly, the burden was heavy to bear. Her tutors had been the trees of the island, the pounding waves that beat its shores, the whisperings of the winds that swept its wooded heights, the majesty of the rising sun, the glory of its setting, and in the lessons of beauty and peace they had taught, there had been no preparation for such an hour as had now come into her life. These teachers, even more than those in the little island school, had molded her into what she was. Their lessons had exalted her imagination and tenderly softened the mind to receive the impressions of Mother Nature;—they had not taught her of the harder way of life that comes in some degree to every mortal, to know and to tread. Ever before when Vivian had trod this road with a step as light as her heart, it had been

## IN THE HANDS OF THE LAW

like an aisle in a great cathedral. Its towering walls of living green had been a benediction. The spreading beeches, the noble maples and pine, the fragrant balsam, the dainty birch, the sturdy cedar, all had contributed their share in glorifying the temple whose arch was formed by the overhanging branches.

But now she sped unthinking of these, past all the old familiar scenes, the parade grounds of the old fort, from whose parapets she had often gazed out upon the straits, Skull Cave with its grewsome memories, the three little cemeteries with their quaintly-inscribed headstones, the battle ground where her forefathers had fought the British;—all these places so familiar and dear to her were now forgotten.

At last exhausted, she came to her home. The little farmhouse was at the lower edge of the place where the Americans and British had fought the memorable battle in which Major Holmes had fallen. Part of this battlefield was now on Mr. Summers' farm. The farm

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

was one of the few on the island, that of George Thorpe being across the way, his home standing a little further up the road. The Thorpe family, who had owned their farm for generations, also had a small piece of land in an almost hidden little valley that ran near to and below Crooked Tree road. It was from the valley farm George had come with his load of hay for St. Ignace.

As Vivian approached the house she began to realize for the first time what she must tell her father and mother. She tried to compose herself for the task, knowing full well how hard the blow would strike. Her parents had known little happiness in life. The lot of an island farmer was hard and brought little compensation. The summers were short, and the rocky soil grudgingly gave up the fruits that were plucked from it. Most of the joy the Summers had had in life had come from their children. Vivian turned the knob of the door and entered. She had scarcely done so when she

## IN THE HANDS OF THE LAW

saw that others had anticipated her, and that trouble had taken wings and preceded her.

Her father was standing by the fireplace, his gray head bowed, his face in his hands. Her mother sat by the window, weeping. In the center of the room stood Rob Collins, the island constable, and near him was his deputy, Elias Graves. Vivian stood but a moment in the doorway, surveying this scene, and then was about to hurry to her mother, when Collins stopped her.

“Where’s your brother?” he demanded. He stood between the girl and her mother, and, without answering, Vivian attempted to pass around him and reach her mother, who had risen to her feet. Collins seized the girl by the arm and said roughly, “See here, this is serious business; where’s your brother?”

Vivian jerked her arm away, answering, “I’ll thank you to keep your hands off me, Rob Collins.”

“Well, I’m satisfied you know something

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

about him, for when you came in that door you plainly showed you had heard of his killing old Manette. Now, tell me where he is.”

The constable was a large man, and the sheer force of his physical presence was emphasized by his words, which did not lack in harshness in their manner of utterance. Yet in the frail, delicate body of the island girl there lived a soul so full of loyalty to those she loved that, overawed and even crushed though she might be, her spirit never so much as quivered in her inflexible allegiance.

“If I know where my brother is you may be sure I shall not tell you,” she said, looking Collins in the face.

“What,” roared he, “you defy the law? Girl, this is murder,—do you know what that means? And do you know what it means to hide the murderer or to assist him to escape? You’ll be getting yourself into hot water.”

The island girl grew white under the contin-



## IN THE HANDS OF THE LAW

ued browbeating of the rude official. She was not used to ugly words, and the physical presence of the constable as well as the brutality of his voice, were such she felt like shutting her eyes and covering her ears, that she might as far as possible blot him out of sight and sound. But he would not have it so. It was by the emphasizing of his personality, that he had been wont to master others. Brute force was his strongest weapon and he used it, when it seemed necessary, to the naked limit. So the ruffian, with his harsh words uttered, drew nearer to Vivian and reached out, as if he would seize her and shake from her the secret he assumed she possessed.

Vivian drew back at his approach, but said not a word. She realized that words would not help the situation.

Mr. Summers took a step forward. "Rob Collins," he said, "whatever my son has done, you have no right to browbeat Vivian. You

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

must not speak to her that way. You have searched the house, and, as I told you, my boy is not here. I'll thank you to go."

"You seem to forget," returned Collins, "that this girl has given every evidence of having heard of the crime. Doubtless she learned it from the lips of its perpetrator; for Jim Hester, who saw him leave the barn before the killing was found out, says he came up to the top of the island; and who told her if your son did not?" He turned to Vivian, "I am going to ask you once more where he is hidden."

"I have nothing to say," steadfastly answered the girl.

"Well, then," declared the constable, "I am going to arrest you as accessory after the fact."

At this declaration, both Mr. and Mrs. Summers raised their voices in protestation, but Vivian uttered not a word.

"I'd take you over to St. Ignace now," continued Collins, "but I've got to organize a

## IN THE HANDS OF THE LAW

posse and beat up the island. I'll leave Graves here to look after you and early in the morning over you'll go."

Mr. Summers again protested, "You have no right to do this, Collins. You are taking the law in your own hands too much."

"See here, Ben Summers," said Collins, "murder has been committed and that is no light crime. Now, it is my duty to capture the culprit and everything points to him as your son. Put one finger in the way and you become culpable. That girl knows where he is. She cannot deny it. I therefore arrest her. Until to-morrow she can be kept here. Graves shall stay here to see she is kept secure. But as soon as morning dawns she goes to St. Ignace; and let me see you trying to interfere in any way and you'll go, too. Do you hear, you'll go, too!"

Vivian, who had listened passively, was now taken to a chamber above the room where Collins so roughly asserted himself, and thrust in.

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

She heard the key turn in the lock and her captors descend to the floor below. She sank on her knees by the bed and prayed for her poor brother, a few hours before so light-hearted and bright, now a miserable fugitive from the law.

THE FLIGHT FROM THE HOUSE



## CHAPTER IV

### THE FLIGHT FROM THE HOUSE

THE room in which Vivian was held a prisoner was on the side of the house which overlooked the battlefield. A great tree stood so near the house that its leaves brushed against the window of the room, though one could look through the branches and see the road as it went winding up over the hill. It was a simple, little room, Vivian's own room in fact, and the few articles of furniture it contained did not crowd it, though it was small.

It was late in the afternoon when the two officers locked the door that made Vivian a prisoner, and a few moments later she heard Collins leaving the house, his loud voice urging the deputy to keep good watch over her. Her thoughts were full of her brother and the possibility of his escape. By this time, Thorpe must

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

have reached the mainland, and once there, the wide world was open for the fugitive.

The hours passed and Vivian at length fell asleep on the little bed, though even in her slumber the events of the day returned and haunted her dreams. As in her waking hours she had had no fear for herself, so now her mind wandered after the course of her wretched brother. As she dreamed the guard admitted her mother, who brought some food, which she placed by the bed without awakening the sleeper. Even in her sleep the tears were trickling down her cheeks and a frequent sigh of unutterable sadness added to the anguish that shook the frame of the poor mother. She tenderly kissed the cheek of her sleeping daughter and quietly left the room.

When Vivian awoke it was late in the night; but the moonbeams that eluded the intervening branches and leaves of the tree and came through the window, were bathing her bed in light. She lay quite still for a while, going



## THE FLIGHT FROM THE HOUSE

over in her waking moments the thoughts that had occupied the hours of her sleep. A loud knock at the front door of the house aroused her from her lethargy, and she heard the heavy tread of Graves as he crossed the floor beneath to respond. A moment later she heard the voice of Collins cutting the still night air, evidently in response to a question of his assistant.

“No, we haven’t caught him. It looks as if he had escaped from the island in some way; how, I can’t make out, for we’ve had every point watched.”

Vivian drew a long breath of joy at the words of the constable. It was certain now that Tom was far distant; the revulsion of feeling almost made her happy.

Graves made some indistinct answer to Collins, who then continued, “They appointed the inquest for nine o’clock in the morning and when we get the girl on the witness stand I rather think we’ll worm some admission out of her that’ll fasten the murder on her brother

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

beyond a doubt. It's clear in my mind she has seen him since the morning and knows all about it. When the coroner gets after her, she'll just have to tell."

For the first time it dawned upon Vivian why they were holding her a prisoner. They believed that Tom had confessed to her and intended to force his words from her.

A trial was a scene from another world than the one in which she had lived and the thought of being placed upon a witness stand and undergoing the ordeal of sharp cross-questioning was terrifying. What secret might not an officer of the law drag from her unwilling breast at such a time. The law, with which she had never had aught to do, was a stern and fearful master to her mind. She felt that be as brave as she might, she could not trust herself to be tested by its relentless demands. And so the first thought of flight came to her and with every moment the idea that she must get beyond the power of any inquisitor grew upon her.

## THE FLIGHT FROM THE HOUSE

Once the thought of escape seized her there was no hesitancy at the project. The door being locked and the way of egress barred below, there remained only the window. A stout branch of the tree reaching close to it, offered a chance to gain the trunk and thus the ground. To one as agile as Vivian, there was no difficulty here, the only danger she feared being the noise that such a venture might cause. The two men had entered the house and were conversing in the room below. The necessity of the utmost caution was realized by her, and she pushed up the window slowly and gently, and to her relief, without so much as making a single creak. Climbing upon the window-sill she stood upright without, leaning forward upon the branch which was less than two feet away. She listened for a moment to reassure herself that her captors had not been disturbed, and as she could hear their voices in muffled conversation, she took courage. Even the moon seemed friendly to her venture, for it disappeared be-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

hind a cloud. Swinging forward with all possible quietness as well as rapidity Vivian reached the branch. Carefully assuring herself again that she had attracted no attention, she began to work her way toward the trunk of the tree. It was necessary to do this slowly, for the foliage was thick and the breaking of a twig might arouse the suspicions of the two men. And so with infinite care she at length reached the body of the tree. Here she could not refrain from a sigh of relief; for to slide to the ground was the work of a moment. Grasping the sides of the maple, she quickly slipped to solid earth. Her feet had scarcely touched the ground when she was seized by someone from behind, and as she attempted to scream her fright a hand was tightly pressed over her lips. Then a well-known voice whispered in her ear, "Keep still, Vivian, it's George Thorpe."

A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF







SUGAR LOAF



## CHAPTER V

### A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF

NOT another word was spoken until Vivian, leaning partially on Thorpe for support, had reached the road and gone part way up the hill, where, breathless from her exertion, the girl sat down by the roadside to recover the possession that had deserted her when Thorpe had so suddenly come upon her as she descended the tree. Her first words were of her brother; had he escaped, was he safe, could they capture him?

The young farmer strove to allay her agitation and told her of how, unchallenged, he had reached St. Ignace with Tom effectually concealed beneath the hay, where he had remained until they had reached a quiet and unfrequented spot. It was near the place where the

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

trains stopped for the engines to take up water, and Thorpe had reconnoitered for several hours while Tom remained in concealment. It was after dusk before an opportunity came, but at length a west-bound freight train gave them the chance they so anxiously awaited, and, fortunately finding a door which easily pried open, Tom was helped aboard by his loyal friend and a few minutes later was being carried westward. Vivian listened to all this with avidity, forgetting that she herself was a fugitive from the law.

“As soon as I could dispose of the hay, and you may be sure I didn't haggle about the price,” continued Thorpe, “I hurried back to the island. I had scarcely reached the village when I heard of your arrest. I would have come to the house at once, but I knew it would do no good, while it would probably give rise to a suspicion that I had assisted Tom to get away. As soon as it got late I came, and reached here just as Collins entered the house.

## A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF

While I stood under the tree, wondering how I could get word to you of Tom's escape, and so reassure you, I was surprised by your advent from the window and descent to the ground. I could not call to you before you descended for fear I would alarm the men within. So I let you slide into my arms. Now, what is the next step?"

"I must get away from here. They are going to have the inquest in the morning and try to force me to tell what I know."

"It's going to be harder to get you away than Tom, I fear," said Thorpe, "besides, is it best for you to go away? Isn't there some other plan?"

"I never could face a trial," cried Vivian. "I am afraid of their questions. It seems impossible for them to drag from me a single admission of what I know, and yet I fear, I fear."

Further conversation was interrupted by a hoarse cry from the house, and looking back, they discovered Collins leaning from the win-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

dow through which Vivian had escaped. He was holding a lamp above his head and as he peered into the branches of the tree, where he evidently expected to find Vivian, he shouted loudly for his deputy to come to his assistance.

The commotion at the house urged Thorpe and Vivian to instant resumption of flight and they hurried up the road and over the hill. While there was no indication that they were being followed, they doubtless soon would be, and no time was lost by them in putting distance between themselves and the farmhouse. Moreover, it was important that Thorpe should not be seen with her, for such a discovery would add to the complications.

“I must get some place to conceal you until I can find a way to get you off the island,” he whispered, “but where it will be is more than I can guess.”

An answer to his problem suddenly loomed up in the darkness. “Sugar Loaf!” ejaculated Thorpe. “It’s just the place for you to hide.”

## A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF

Sugar Loaf, an obelisk of corniferous limestone, was one of the wonders of the island. Rising from the surrounding ground, its rugged sides of calcareous rock spoke of an age when either a vast upheaval had lifted its head above its fellows, or when the waters of the lake had covered the island, and as they sunk, had broken down the surrounding masses and left this conical pyramid standing alone. An opening some five feet above the ground led into a small room, which legend recited, had been the wigwam of the great Manitou, when his canoe swept the lake and his red children dwelt upon the island.

“Sugar Loaf,” said Vivian, rather doubtfully; “it is not the most concealed place on the island.”

“That is one reason why they won’t think of you choosing it as a hiding place,” replied Thorpe. “It is not a likely spot for one to hide, and I think it will do until I return. That is,” he added, “if you are willing to try it.”

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

“Of course, I will if you think best, but I cannot help fear that those men will find me here. You will hurry back, won’t you?”

“I’ll be back before daybreak,” reassured Thorpe, “and I think there is little danger of their searching here. At any rate, not before then. I am going to try and get a boat and row you over to the mainland, and that must be done before the alarm is general.”

Vivian consented to the arrangement without further comment. Her mind was full of the present task of escaping the inquisition of the coroner. For the future she had no plans and indeed gave it no thought. With Thorpe’s assistance she was soon in the little stony aperture. With a few comforting words and promises of speedy return, Thorpe left her, and the girl, now thoroughly exhausted, overcome with fatigue and worry, soon fell asleep on the hard floor of her place of refuge.

Her companion hastened toward the village, where he hoped to secure either a sail or row-

## A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF

boat and without discovery carry the fleeing girl to the mainland. Nor did he intend to leave her there to shift for herself, but rather to stay by her side until he had found a place of safety and comfort, where unmolested she might securely stay until the worst of the trouble had passed and a way for the future had opened.

George Thorpe had never told Vivian that he loved her, while she, having had his friendship all her life, had never thought or dreamed that the boy who had been her brother's chum and her own playmate, even in her earliest memory, had for a long time been determined to win her affection. The young farmer was five years older than Vivian, and when he found the affection of his youth turning into love, he had determined to wait until he was sure of her heart before speaking for it. His loyalty to Tom was nothing new. As boys and young men, they were known the length and breadth of the island as fast friends. George was quieter and less fond of the little gayeties of the village

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

than Tom, but he was every bit as sturdy. His parents had died when he was young, and his patrimony was a farm which, with the exception of the Summers farm and a few other pieces of land, took up nearly every bit of farm land on the island. The responsibility of managing and caring for this property gave him less time than most young men of the island for the society of his fellows.

For a time we will leave Vivian slumbering in the recesses of the great rock, and George Thorpe in his search for a means of flight from the island, and return to the worthy constable Collins and his equally estimable coadjutor, Mr. Graves. When Collins, who was essentially of a suspicious nature, had ascended the stairs of the farmhouse and opened the door to his prisoner's room, to make sure of her presence, he found that the doubt in which he really had no faith was a truth—the girl was gone. It was a moment before he could grasp the fact, for on the ability of the coroner to wrest all that Viv-



## A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF

ian knew from her unwilling lips, Collins had built up all his hopes of conclusive evidence against Tom. In his mind he had pictured a timid girl writhing under the keen cross-questioning of the law and always in the picture there came the personal triumph and vindication for Vivian's arrest, which he had already found did not meet with favor in the eyes of the islanders. They had even laughed at him because the brother had outwitted him and escaped; and now to have the sister do the same thing was a cruel blow to his vanity. The open window revealed the way his prisoner had gone, and holding the lamp he carried high above his head he reached far out of the window, eagerly scanning the branches of the trees in evident hope of finding the girl clinging to them, while he lifted his voice in high clamor for the recreant Graves, whom he was now prepared to blame and curse for the escape.

His shouts not only brought the deputy, but also Mr. and Mrs. Summers, who came wonder-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

ing what new calamity had befallen them. The sharp questioning of the constable soon revealed that neither of the old people had any hand in this startling sequel to the day's doings, or that they even had any knowledge of it. Collins was not satisfied, however, until he had searched the house carefully, and when he and Graves had finished this task, he growled out, "Well, Tom Summers is here on the island yet and has helped the girl in this; for she never would have had nerve to do it all by herself."

"Where do you suppose they're hiding?" ventured Graves, who was considerably crestfallen by the escape, which Collins laid entirely at his door, claiming it must have happened before his return to the house.

"Somewhere on the island, and it proves just what I've thought all along, that Summers wasn't able to find a way off. Well, he can't get far with that girl on his hands and I'm for starting right in and trailing them down."

Graves objected to this, saying that it was

## A REFUGE IN SUGAR LOAF

best to go over to the village and organize a party.

“What! And let them know the girl has slipped through our hands? Not if I know myself. You come along.”

Graves was a wretched creature, who had been badgered by Collins so long that he no more had the will to resent his domineering and he followed, hoping by a ready obedience to escape further abuse.

All the rest of the night the two men scoured the top of the island in search of their prey. Collins was indefatigable and Graves, cringing under the reproofs that constantly poured from his superior's lips, closed his teeth tightly and lent every aid in his hope that he might redeem himself. Just as the stars began to go out and the first tinge of morning gray came across the sky, the two came to the little opening in the woods where, like a sentinel, the Sugar Loaf stood. Worn out with their labors, they both threw themselves on the ground at its base and

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Collins, completely letting go of his patience, rent the air with curses loud and long at their ill fortune.

VIVIAN OUTWITS HER PURSUERS



## CHAPTER VI

### VIVIAN OUTWITS HER PURSUERS

VIVIAN slumbered heavily, unmindful of the passing hours and the delayed return of her companion, all the time her pursuers were steadily approaching her place of refuge. Undisturbed, it is probable she would have slept through the day just breaking, but she was suddenly brought back to consciousness by the sound of harsh tones, and awoke to find that the men whom she sought to elude were at the very door of her hiding place. She recognized their voices at once, and for the moment believed she was discovered. Then realizing that they had not traced her to her place of hiding, but had come upon it by accident, she took hope, thinking that they might continue on their way

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

without coming into the little apartment of the rock.

This apartment, which scarcely allowed a person to stand erect, was but a few feet square in space, and afforded no place of concealment if these men should come in. It was possible that Thorpe might return, and, recognizing the situation, would lead the men away. Vivian was to be disappointed in this, for she heard Collins complaining of the chill of the morning and declaring he was going to enter the chamber where she was hiding, in search of more comfort. Catching hold of the bottom of the entrance, he prepared to lift himself up and in, and his head and shoulders were already darkening the doorway, when Vivian sprang forward and pushed him back to the ground. The attack was so unexpected that she caught him completely unawares and he fell over Graves, who was back of him, and knocking that worthy over, they rolled together to the foot of the little hill, both of them speech-



## VIVIAN OUTWITS HER PURSUERS

less with surprise. They were not long in getting to their feet and turned once more toward the rock to find Vivian standing in the opening. About the floor of the little room were bits of the structure which had fallen from time to time from the loosely-woven limestone and the largest of these she had seized and was holding it high above her head. The use she meant to put to it was plainly evident to the men and they hesitated in their advance.

“You’re caught, you’re caught,” cried Collins, who, despite his mishap, was delighted to find his game in so sure a trap. “You’re caught and you might as well give up.”

“Come down out of that,” seconded Graves, “or we’ll fetch you out.”

“Just you try,” replied Vivian defiantly; “just you try and you’ll feel this rock against your head.”

“Now, see here,” coaxed the constable, “you’re not gaining anything by this. We’ve got you and you might as well come along.”

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

With the words he started toward her. The rock quivered in the air above his head and thinking better of it he retreated.

“Lookee,” cried Graves, “if she can use rocks, why can’t we?”

The constable welcomed this suggestion with delight and the two men scurried about the road gathering up stones, while Vivian, alarmed at the turn affairs had taken, disappeared within the cavity. It looked as if she was to be captured at last, when suddenly her anxious mind remembered that in a slant of the wall behind her there was a large crevice which led out to an opening in the other side of the rock. Few knew of this crevice, for the opening was concealed on the inside by a ledge which jutted out before it and the approach from without was close to a precipitous side of Sugar Loaf which faced a dense wood and was known to only a few. If this opening had been larger, it would probably have been better known, but it was so small that she had never known of any-

## VIVIAN OUTWITS HER PURSUERS

one attempting to get through it; and yet, in this moment of her need, she felt that by this avenue was her only way of escape. She dislodged a loose stone which had fallen into the mouth of the crevice, and, without stopping to question her ability to get through the narrow passage which led to the outer world, she rapidly struggled into the opening and wrenched her way along. It was only a few feet, and yet on a less urgent occasion the task would have appalled her, but she already heard the rattling of the first stones into the chamber she had just left, and the terrors of capture added to the strength with which she literally wormed herself on and on and out into the open.

If her enemies had not been afraid of the blow they believed waiting for them in the room she had left, she would never have had the time to have made her escape. It was this fear holding them back that gave her time and she soon was on the opposite face of the rock, from which she softly slid down into

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

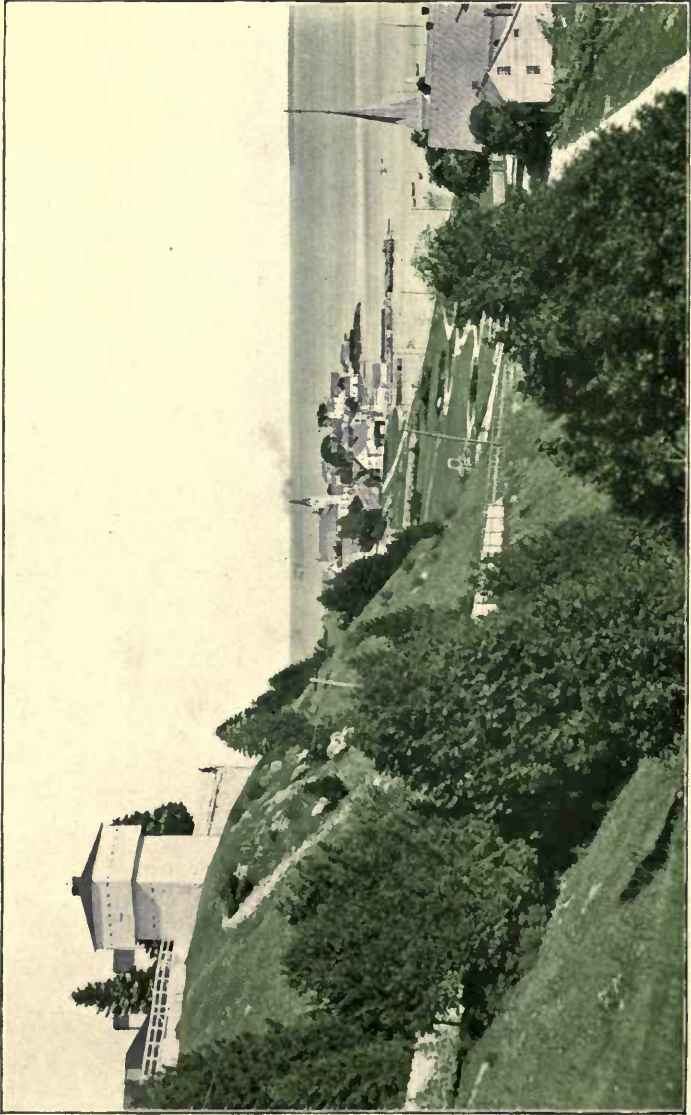
the bushes and upon the rocks below. Her dress had been reduced to ribbons in her struggle through the passage and numerous bruises showed themselves on the soft skin; but taking little note of this, she fled into the welcoming forest, whose every byway she knew so well.

Meanwhile, the men on the other side of the rock, encouraged by no indications of resistance to their bombardment, advanced nearer to the cave and listened. Hearing no sound, they believed one of their stones had taken effect and struck their victim senseless. Venturing nearer and still meeting with no opposition they at length lifted themselves into the cave. For the second time that day they were speechless, gazing at each other in amazement.

AT THE OLD FORT







THE FORT HEIGHTS



## CHAPTER VII

### AT THE OLD FORT

WHEN Thorpe left Vivian in Sugar Loaf, secure from discovery as he believed, he lost no time in covering the ground between her place of hiding and the old fort on the brow of the island, from whose heights he intended to make his way to the village. There he hoped most speedily to discover a means of transit to the mainland for his charge. Several of his friends had light craft, which he felt at liberty to take, though now he was anxious surreptitiously to make use of their property, for if they knew of his voyage across the straits at such an unusual hour, embarrassing questions were sure to follow. It was considerably past midnight. He knew that to make the journey and succeed in returning the boat without dis-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

covery before daybreak, he would be obliged to work rapidly. The promise of rough weather which the day now past had held out had not been fulfilled. Every cloud had vanished from the sky, which was gemmed with stars, while the moon, drawing aside the dark curtain of the night, lighted his pathway between the long aisles of the trees with a mellow radiance.

When Thorpe reached the fort grounds, he paused a moment to wipe the perspiration from his brow, for though the night was cool, his rapid pace had made itself felt. From the road where he stopped there were two ways to the winding stairs by which he meant to descend to the village. One of these was across the parade grounds to the rear of the row of the old army buildings. The other was by a narrow path which led directly to the edge of the fortifications and across the verandas fronting the buildings and extended to the railings which rose from the sheer front of the cliff, preventing the careless stroller from toppling over to

## AT THE OLD FORT

the rock-strewn hill beneath. He chose the latter way, for he wished to use the wide survey of the island and lakes to see if any were astir who might interrupt him in his mission.

As he stepped upon the veranda and gazed out on the inland seas, what a sight was spread out before him. No song was upon the lips of the quiet waters to-night, but unruffled they stretched in a majestic blue to right and left. Across the straits the green of Bois Blanc rose from the waters, the sands of its uninhabited shores gleaming in the soft moonlight and adding to the calm that seemed to envelope all the unfathomable world. The white light of the stars lent a serenity to the brooding stillness.

Thorpe silently marveled at this scene, often beheld before, and which always held him in its spell. His mind fevered with the anxieties of the past hours was rested by the loveliness his eye drank in. He looked up into the studded sky and its haunting beauty cooled the fevers of his soul. For a moment he pondered on the

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

significance of the stars, feeling if he could only pierce their depths he might there find the mystery of life. It all conspired to strengthen him in his duty to his friends. This was what life was for, to give loyalty to your beloved.

He made his way across the planks that formed the walk and had all but reached the end of the farthest building when he came upon a woman. She was kneeling, her arms resting upon the railing, her gaze fastened upon the waters. His step aroused her almost as soon as he discovered her presence and she sprang up and faced him. It was Lettie Manette. Never had the young French-Canadian girl's comeliness been more striking than now, when it was evident that she was being stirred by the strongest emotions. Her dark beauty shone forth in the distress that possessed her, her bosom heaving in convulsive agony, her eyes wet with the tears she had been shedding. Nor was Thorpe surprised at this, for if woman must needs weep, surely the death of a father

## AT THE OLD FORT

at the hand of a lover may be deemed sufficient cause. He had known Lettie as a strong, determined girl, considered by many far too self-willed. She was undoubtedly of remarkable firmness of purpose and resoluteness of will. This was the first time he had ever seen her melted and again he was not surprised, for the adversity of the last few hours might well have softened a heart of iron. Thorpe had believed that the favor she bestowed on Tom was genuine, not only because her other suitors had all been given so short a shrift, but because she had continued this favor in the face of her father's opposition, and those who came in touch with Louis Manette were easily convinced he was a hard man to thwart.

Lettie recognized Thorpe at once and exclaimed, "Tell me, where is Tom? I must see him!"

Thorpe hesitated before he replied. He did not wish to complicate matters by revealing the part he had taken in his friend's escape, and he

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

also feared that, though Tom had had the girl's heart, if she once succeeded in tracing him she would not hesitate to turn her father's slayer over to the law.

While he was thus pondering, she grasped him by the arm and exclaimed, "You are his friend, you must know where he is. Tell me."

"Even if I know where Tom is," replied Thorpe, "nothing but evil could come of my telling you. Don't you see that?"

"Ah, Mr. Thorpe, you do not understand. It is imperative that I see him. You must tell me."

"My poor girl," said Thorpe, "you are distracted by the sad events of the day. Let me urge you to return to your home. You need rest for your body and mind."

"My God!" cried the girl, "I can never go home, I can never go anywhere until I have seen Tom. Oh, I assure you, Mr. Thorpe, my wish is to do him no harm. I have something

## AT THE OLD FORT

I must tell him. Something he must know. Oh, I beg of you, take me to him.”

With her last words, the excited girl sank to her knees and supplicated with outstretched hands.

Thorpe was deeply moved by her distress and raising her from the ground placed her on a bench that ran along the side of the house. He tried to soothe her with comforting words, only to be met again and again with the plea to tell of Tom's whereabouts. His efforts to quiet her being unavailing, he said at length, “Lettie, if I must trust you with a secret I should keep in my own breast, let it be sufficient for you to know he is far from here. In truth, I can tell you no more, for his course is as unknown to me as it is to you.”

The girl staggered to her feet exclaiming, “If this is so, I must go and search all the world for him. I must not wait, I must go at once.”

Thorpe, appalled by her earnestness, cried,

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

“What is this for? Surely, I hope, not for revenge.”

“Revenge!” cried Lettie, and her form shook with suppressed emotion, “Revenge! Ah, how little you know. It is for love.”

“Even then,” urged Thorpe, “you cannot leave the island now. Why, your father is not buried yet.”

“I leave the island at once. The dead cannot stop me. Nothing can stop me. I have a duty to the living.”

The girl became more like her usual self as she uttered these words, the meaning of which was fraught with mystery to her companion. She led the way toward the foot of the hill with Thorpe following. She spoke no more to him and when they reached the road that ran along the edge of the island, without a word of farewell she darted away in the direction of her home and was soon lost from the strained gaze of Thorpe, who hesitated between following her, to seek an interpretation of her words, or to



## AT THE OLD FORT

continue in his search for a boat. He decided on the latter, though some intuition struggling in his mind told him that the meaning of what the girl had said, if known, would be of no small moment.

His search for a small craft proved a more difficult task than he had anticipated. He went to nook after nook where he knew friends kept their boats, but either they had taken them and were away on some fishing trip, or they were so securely chained that an attempt to break the lock would have been sure to attract the attention he was so anxious to avoid.

The first glimmer of light was beginning to tinge the eastern sky before he was successful in his quest, and then he found a dingey whose seaworthiness was far from promising. He felt too much time had already been lost to warrant him in seeking further, in fact he began to be doubtful if it were not already too late to get Vivian from the island that day.

While these thoughts were troubling him he

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

was not losing any time by stopping to meditate over them, and the boat was already pushing its prow through the water under his steady and swift pull at the oars. He had carefully considered the best point to get Vivian off the island and had decided to make the venture at Arch Rock. This place was one of the wonders of the island, a great mass of calcareous stone towering above the bank, along whose side was a precipitous pathway. At this time of the day it was unlikely to be frequented, while its nearness to Sugar Loaf was a recommendation. Ten minutes after he had secured the boat at this point on the shore he came upon Sugar Loaf. There at the opening to Vivian's hiding place he found the officers of the law, madly gesticulating and filling the air with acrimonious cries.

THE RESULT OF THE INQUEST







ARCH ROCK

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE RESULT OF THE INQUEST

WHEN Thorpe found Collins and Graves storming at Sugar Loaf, their actions made it clear to him that though they had seen Vivian she had escaped them in some way. Their words verified this, for they were indulging in recriminations, each trying to throw upon the other the blame for their ill-fortune. Before acquainting them with his presence, for they were too enraged to notice anybody, Thorpe had ample time to collect himself, and then, leisurely sauntering forward, he asked what all the trouble was about. Collins, without replying to the question, eagerly asked if he had seen the Summers girl.

“The Summers girl?” replied Thorpe. “Why, I heard that you had her under arrest.”

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

“We did that,” asserted the constable, “but she has given us the slip. We thought we had her a while ago, for we found her hiding here in Sugar Loaf.”

“Hiding in Sugar Loaf,” echoed Thorpe, “and how on earth did she get away from you, if you had her cornered in Sugar Loaf?”

“The young wildcat kept us away with rocks and when we went to the road to gather some rocks ourselves and play her at her own game, I’ll be blowed if she didn’t slip out under our very eyes and get away. Thunderation, I don’t see how she did it.”

“I know well enough how she did it,” growled Graves, “there’s no question about that; she’s in league with the devil.”

“Enough from you,” snarled his superior; “I sometimes think she’s in league with you, for I blame you for her escape.”

“And what are you going to do now?” queried Thorpe.

“There’s no use trying to find her now, and



## RESULT OF THE INQUEST

I haven't had a wink of sleep or scarcely a bite for twenty-four hours. I'm going back to the village."

With a brief good-by, Collins, followed by the crestfallen Graves, strode away toward the town, leaving Thorpe meditating over the new turn affairs had taken. He was as mystified as were the two men at Vivian's success in getting away. There could be no harm in investigating and he clambered up into the cave. There was nothing unusual there, and after a few minutes he was about to leave when he noticed a bit of cloth clinging to a piece of rock that jutted out from the wall. He knew at once that it was a piece of Vivian's dress. He examined the wall more closely, and behind the jutting rock he found a large opening. He was excited now, for he felt sure he had hit upon the way of the girl's escape.

When Vivian had gone through the hole several large rocks had been dislodged and had fallen into the inner entrance, choking

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

it. This was fortunate, for otherwise the light which would have entered would probably have acquainted her pursuers with her mode of exit. Thorpe was not long in finding this out, and as soon as he had satisfied himself on this score he went outside, and carefully working his way around the rock, found the place where Vivian had come through. He tried to follow her trail, but once in the woods there was nothing to indicate which way she had taken, and believing she would be safe for the day, he decided to go to the village and attend the inquest to be held that morning. When night came he believed he would be able to find her again and carry her to safety, little dreaming that a tiny craft, which one at that moment might have discovered from the highest peak of the island, was rapidly bearing her away to the bosom of the great lake.

It was almost noon before the inquest was called. The constable and his deputy had spent most of the morning gathering witnesses,

## RESULT OF THE INQUEST

many of them unwilling ones, for though there was no doubt in the minds of the islanders that Tom had committed the murder, their memory was so full of his frank manliness that they hesitated at the thought of being used to fasten the crime upon him.

Collins was much perturbed at not being able to find the dead man's daughter. He had not counted on any trouble in that direction, but when Jim Hester declared she had not been about the house that morning the constable was puzzled. Hester, himself, was anxious about her disappearance, though unable to guess what had become of her.

The first witnesses called upon were examined as to their knowledge of the ill-feeling between the deceased and Tom Summers. This fact was easily established. Among these were several who were present when Manette had attempted to stab Tom and had been knocked down for his pains. Others testified of Manette's determination to come between his daugh-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

ter and Tom, and of the words that had passed. All the threats seemed to emanate from Manette, but the testimony was sufficient to show that there was no love lost between the two men.

Jim Hester was the star witness of the day. He told of Tom's coming to the house and asking for Mr. Manette. He said he had directed him to the barn and that Tom had gone there. Later he saw him pass the house, apparently laboring under excitement, but believing nothing worse than hard words had passed between the two, he paid no attention to the incident. A little later he had occasion to go to the barn and there he found his employer dead, stabbed to the heart with a pitchfork, which lay by his side. When asked if anyone else was there at the time, he said that Miss Manette entered the barn at the same time he did and shared with him in the discovery. A few other questions were asked concerning details and the case went to the jury.

## RESULT OF THE INQUEST

Thorpe, who listened to the testimony, was dissatisfied with that of Hester. While he could pick no flaws in it, for it fitted in with the story Tom himself had told the day before, yet he had a subtle feeling that there was a note of falsehood about it. He was disgusted at the glib manner in which Hester fastened the crime on Tom, for the man gave the evidence with an all too willing air that seemed to make it a positive pleasure.

The jury was out but a short time, and the verdict they gave was probably anticipated by everyone on the island. It was that Louis Manette met his death at the hands of Thomas Summers. There was a deep silence not only in the court room but in the streets of the village, when the verdict was known. There was not a man, woman or child in all Mackinac who had known Tom Summers who did not feel the weight of the sorrow.

Thorpe went to the parents of his friend at once and as gently as possible told them

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

of the result. He found them greatly disturbed at the disappearance of Vivian. He was in a quandary as to how much to tell them. His right to tell them the story of the incident which Tom had told Vivian and himself, appeared doubtful. While it lifted the shadow of murder and made it more like an accident, he shared Tom's fear that in the light of the quarrels that had preceded the death of Manette the jury might accept the admission of the act while it rejected the explanation of the manner in which the dead man had met his fate as a story cleverly concocted by a man who wished to escape the penalty of his crime. If, then, he told them what he knew it might place them in the same position as Vivian, to whom the knowledge of the truth had become a burden. But he felt that it was incumbent upon him to lighten their load some, and he told them that Vivian was still in hiding on the island, but that on this very night she was to leave in hopes of being able to join her brother and give him the comfort he so sorely needed.

## RESULT OF THE INQUEST

His mission performed at the Summers, Thorpe crossed to his own home, where he suddenly realized he was half famished, for he had not eaten that day, and after satisfying his hunger he sought the sleep he had neglected for almost two days. It was nine o'clock at night when he was aroused from his slumber by a servant whom he had directed to awake him at that hour.

All that night Thorpe wandered over the island in search of Vivian. Every place she was likely to frequent he had visited, but not a trace could he find. Morning found him worn with the labors of the night, but convinced that in some way Vivian had left the island. If she had not he felt that she would have been on the watch for him, and that somewhere during the night they would have met. He returned to his home and for several days worked as one driven by the lash, striving to forget the anxiety he felt for the girl, whom he now realized more than ever held his happiness in her possession.

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

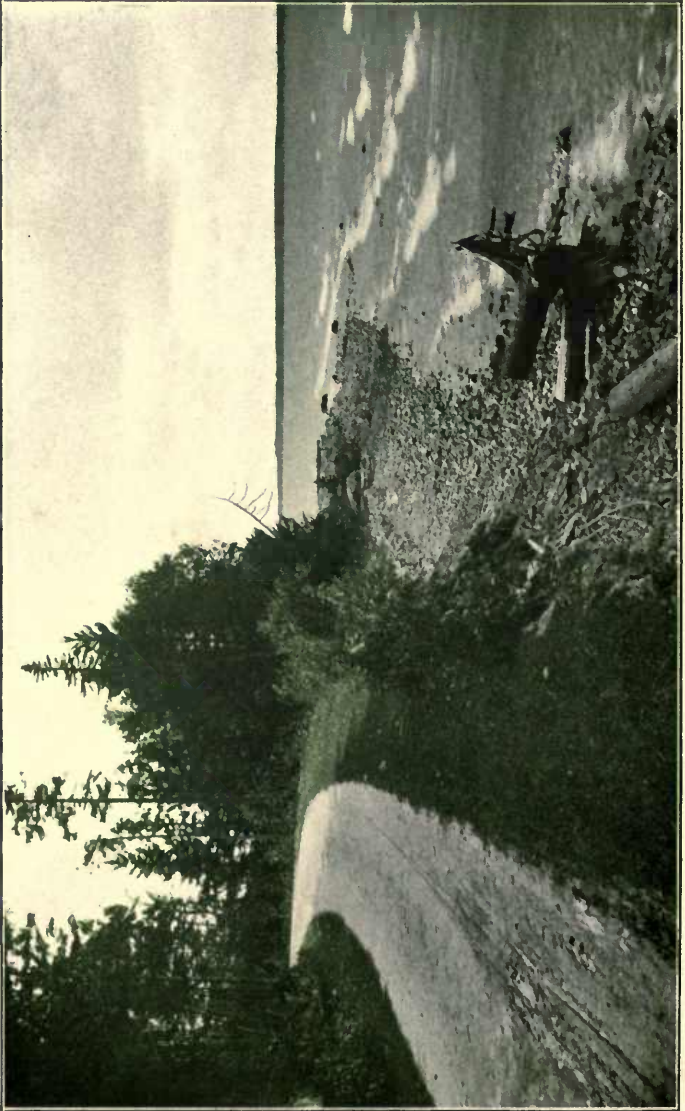
At the end of a week he called his hired man to him and gave him directions concerning the affairs of the farm. Having done this he prepared to leave the island. He was going to find Vivian.



A BOAT IN THE STRAITS







THE STRAITS

## CHAPTER IX

### A BOAT IN THE STRAITS

WHEN Vivian plunged down the side of the steep and into the woods she fully expected to hear the heavy tread of her pursuers hurrying after her. She did not fear them, though she had when it seemed as if they had her trapped, for she knew every nook and corner of the island and she was confident that now being in the open she had more than a fair chance to elude them. The trees were close together and the underbrush was heavy, but she knew a little by-path that led to one of the main roads, and finding it, she speedily made her way to the road. As she was about to cross, she heard someone running in her direction along the road, and she sank down into the bushes until the footsteps died away in the

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

distance. If she had but peered through the leaves that hid her she would have seen it was the one she was seeking, but Thorpe all unconscious that he had been so close to his charge, hurried on, and Vivian did not know it. She was depending so entirely upon him to get her away from the island that she decided to venture to the shore, hoping to find him and lessen the time his coming for her would take. With this in view, it was important she should reach the water-front as quickly as possible.

Coming to the bluff, she found herself almost directly back of the old Mission House, the place where she had seen her brother so laboriously climb the morning before. Though it was near the home of the Manettes, she believed it was still too early, despite the growing light, for anyone to be about, and without hesitating she boldly plunged down the cliff and soon was at the bottom. She passed out into the road and started toward the shore,

## A BOAT IN THE STRAITS

when she was violently grasped by the shoulders and whirled around to find herself face to face with Lettie Manette.

Before she could speak, Lettie demanded, "Do you know where Tom has gone? Can you tell me?"

Vivian had seen Lettie but once before and that was for a few minutes when, with one of the happy crowds from the village, she had come to the farmhouse for Tom. She recognized her at once and believing, as Thorpe had at first believed, that she sought the fugitive to give him over to the officers, she kept silent. Her whole attitude so clearly revealed this to the girl who still clutched her, that she hastened to say, "I am not going to harm Tom, believe me, it is for his good I wish to see him."

The words were so spoken that they were almost convincing, and Vivian grasping at a last hope, cried, "If you really want to help Tom, get me off the island. The officers are after me to make me testify against him."

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

“Make you testify against him,” cried the girl, “why, what can you tell?”

“They believe Tom told me something about—” Vivian stopped short, remembering to whom she was talking. Lettie understood and said, “It is better for both of us to leave the island, and when we get away, if you will trust me and if you know where Tom is, I want you to take me to him.”

“But how can we get away?”

“If you had come five minutes later I should have been gone. I know how to sail a boat and I have stocked mine for a trip. Will you go with me?”

Vivian eagerly assented. Though she was half afraid of the girl beside her it seemed best to trust her for the present. She despaired of finding Thorpe, and the sun was already mounting above the horizon. Yes, she would go. When this was settled, Lettie lost no time in leading her to the boat, where once seated she spread sail and cast off. Vivian



## A BOAT IN THE STRAITS

sank down in the bow, resting her arm and head upon a seat. Lettie took the helm and steered toward the waters of Lake Michigan. A light breeze filled the sail and the boat glided along through the smooth waters. Lettie shaped the course so that they filled away from the shore out into the middle of the channel. Before they could reach the open beyond, the boat must pass the village and it was important to be as far away from any chance observer as possible.

Vivian's mind was filled with conflicting emotions as she was carried away from the home she had never left before. At first her heart leaped at the thought that she had escaped the ordeal of the inquest, but she forgot this as they passed each familiar spot, now plainly revealed in the early morning light. How beautifully the tranquil bluffs rose from the opaline waters! The sea birds were wheeling and screaming about the cliffs, and standing in all its terraced glory was the old fort,

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

its white walls shining with the splendor of the rising sun. Though they were now far out in the channel, the fragrance of the cedars was borne to them on the morning breeze. A hundred memories of joyful days spent in the cloistered woods that crowned yonder summits leaped to her mind. A hundred recollections of the island home and of a happy childhood crowded upon her, and all the while the little craft was taking her farther and farther away. When should she see these loved shores again? What trials and sorrows awaited her in the great world beyond?

The boat hastened on into the waters of Michigan, where the breeze freshened and it bended lower under the sail swelling to the full. The island grew smaller and smaller until it became a mere speck upon the horizon and then disappeared. Vivian could not repress the tears that came welling to her eyes. She felt desolate and alone, her heart heavy with foreboding of the future.

THE HUMBLING OF JIM HESTER



## CHAPTER X

### THE HUMBLING OF JIM HESTER

THE funeral of Louis Manette was held the day after the inquest. It is still remembered as the most largely attended funeral ever held on the island. Though Manette had made no close friends during the months he had lived among the islanders, the incidents connected with his death, rather than a sense of regret, served to draw the crowds that swarmed his late home to overflowing. The simple folks whose lives were so devoid of sensation wanted to make the most of this one. Both inside and without the house they were busy discussing the events which had so startled them.

Many were the conjectures concerning the whereabouts of Tom and Vivian, while the new mystery that had been added by the disappear-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

ance of Lettie furnished fresh fuel for the fire. It was easy to understand why the brother and sister had fled, but why the daughter of the dead man should leave without a word, neglecting even the obsequies of her father, was inexplicable. There were not a few ready with surmises, and these, growing in volume on their rounds, would come back to their originators in the form of definite stories, so changed and added to that they were not recognized by their authors as their own children, though they were accepted by them as absolute facts. Many insisted that Tom was still concealed on the island, and one graybeard was very emphatic in declaring he had either seen Tom or someone very much like Tom in the vicinity of Skull Cave, the night before. Another wise-acre believed all this and declared it was simply another instance of the old saying that a murderer could not keep away from the scene of his crime.

Jim Hester was in special prominence at the

## THE HUMBLING OF JIM HESTER

funeral. With the departure of Lettie he had taken full charge, and he was respectfully conceded the position of chief mourner by the interested people who thronged everywhere in and about the house. There were those who thought they could discern under his superintendence an ill-concealed satisfaction. They were not mistaken. Hester was in truth very well satisfied with the turn events had taken.

Though it was not known on the island, he had been with the Manettes in upper Canada, and when they came to Mackinac, he had followed chiefly because he was infatuated with Lettie. The appearance of Tom Summers upon the scene and the ease with which he had won the girl's favor had enraged Hester beyond measure, and it was he who had carried the tales to Manette that had brought about the ill-feeling. Again, it was his testimony before the coroner that had placed the crime at Tom's door, and he was sanguine that with Tom out of the field, he possessed means hidden away in

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

his mind which he meant to use with Lettie if she was intractable. He fully believed that it was because Lettie was afraid he would exert these means that she had fled.

Such thoughts as these filled the mind of Hester as the funeral cortege wended its way to the little cemetery on the top of the island. The grave of Louis Manette was soon made. Beneath the trees on the wind-swept heights he was left to await the voice that shall summon all to come forth on the day of decision. Hester stood by the grave until the crowd had melted away. Soon they were all gone and he was left in the pleasant silence that pervaded everything. A little headstone near the newly-made grave offered a seat and taking it, he reflected over his plans for the future.

The story of his connection with Manette is due the reader. It will give him a glimpse of the dead man's life which was undreamed of by the islanders, and which would have answered the question which many of them had pondered



## THE HUMBLING OF JIM HESTER

over as to why a stranger should come to Mackinac and take up farming on the small scale that was necessary there. Such a thing had never been heard of before, the few farmers on the island having been born there and remained from their love of the place, rather than the rich prospects it held out to them.

For years Manette had carried on in his Canadian home the business of counterfeiting. He was an adept engraver and his products were puzzling to the most skillful government officials. Every move the veteran criminal made was characterized by the greatest craftiness; and not until within the last year had the authorities succeeded in making it so warm for him that discretion suggested a search for new fields. With this in view he had come to Mackinac, though he had not taken up counterfeiting, believing it was best to wait until the stir, created by some of his past adventures, had died away.

Lettie had known of her father's occupation,

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

though she had not shared in it. It had served to wean her away from him, though she had been brought up in the atmosphere of his crimes, and her moral convictions had been somewhat smothered by this, yet the stealth and fraud with which the thing was carried on had grown revolting to her as she came to years of understanding.

Manette had always felt that Lettie might prove an excellent accomplice at the business if she would but be willing, and it was because of this hope he had repelled the attentions that were bestowed on her by Tom. His need for a companion in his enterprises had been met by Hester. With him he had been associated for several years. When he had seen the attraction that Lettie had possessed for Hester, he had welcomed it, for through a union of the two he believed that his daughter might ultimately be brought to give the valuable assistance to his schemes of which he had always believed her capable. If

## THE HUMBLING OF JIM HESTER

Manette had been a less ill-tempered man, his natural caution which had been largely developed of necessity would have led him to have taken other means than open enmity to have ridden himself of Tom, but his rage was so great at the idea that the young islander was going to thwart him in his plans that he could not contain himself. His short-sightedness had resulted in the tragedy which had cost him his life.

Hester thought over these things as he formed his plans for the future. He was free to go out into the world and find the girl. Despite the suspicions that had grown up around her father in their old home, Hester knew she had friends in the little Canadian fishing town, and he was fully persuaded in his own mind that Lettie had fled there, hoping to find in its obscurity freedom from his presence. Hester had always known that Lettie hated him. Now he believed she feared him. He smiled at the thought. He was going to

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

make this girl who had always been so resolute cringe to his will.

A quick step along the road caught his ear and looking up, he saw George Thorpe passing. Thorpe was one of the few people on the island who had not appeared at the funeral. Hester knew that it was his friendship for the Summers that had kept him away, and he also knew that much of the sympathy that had been generated in the village for Tom, since the catastrophe, had been through the influence of Thorpe. An evil spirit within prompted him to taunt Thorpe and vaulting the picket fence that separated the graveyard from the road he sneered, "Good-day to you, Thorpe, aren't you lonesome without your old friends?"

Thorpe had no desire to quarrel with the fellow, but the covert insinuation touched his loyalty to the quick. "Very much so," he responded, "especially when I consider the scant material for association they left behind."

Hester, taken back by the readiness with

## THE HUMBLING OF JIM HESTER

which his meanness had been received, replied, "Well, if a man prefers an assassin for a companion I suppose it is his own business."

"It may indeed be his own business," coolly returned Thorpe, "but there are those in this neighborhood who cannot refrain from trying to make it theirs."

"Birds of a feather, you know," weakly replied Hester.

"Oh, I don't notice any other buzzards around here," said Thorpe.

Hester began to feel uncomfortable. Perhaps he had better have stayed on the other side of the fence. In his anger he accepted the designation, "A buzzard at least doesn't kill."

Thorpe cheerily assented to this, "Ah, I see you are acquainted with the habits of the bird. You know, of course, that craven-like he slinks far away until the deed is done and then picks the bones of the dead."

The fling sank into Hester's marrow. He launched at Thorpe with a vicious blow.

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Thorpe received him gladly. He was convinced that the fellow needed a sound thrashing, and he felt that it was within his power to give it to him. Hester, who knew that Thorpe was physically his superior, had not meant to be drawn into a contest of this kind, and he never forgave himself afterward that he had allowed his anger to make him forget his resolution. His opponent took advantage of the opportunity and administered a chastisement that did not cease until he was beseeched for mercy.

“Hereafter be more polite when you address your betters,” admonished Thorpe, who then went his way over the hill, leaving Hester nursing his wounds, hot with the vengefulness he dared not express.

“THE LITTLE EVA”





## CHAPTER XI

### “THE LITTLE EVA”

ADMIRAL PETER SIMMONS paced the deck of his craft, *The Little Eva*, in a rage. A face well adapted to the smiles it usually wore was now surmounted by a frown, while his portly form, ordinarily the personification of comfortable satisfaction, was shaken with anger. Never, since he had become an admiral on the great lake the year before, had he given way to wrath, which now filled him to the full. Occasionally he stopped in his tracks and gave vent to maledictions which all seemed to be directed at an invisible female, Eliza by name.

A wholesome looking woman came up from the cabin, and as she witnessed his gyrations, exclaimed, “There now, Admiral, nothing can

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

be helped by taking on that way. Calm yourself and you will be better able to find a way out of the difficulty.”

“Mrs. Simmons,” said the Admiral, with considerable emphasis, “Mrs. Peter Simmons, you are calm enough. Will you please find the way?”

“Now, Peter,” soothingly replied his wife, “I will leave that to you. You are the manager. You always have found a way. You will do it now.”

This tribute to his astuteness mollified the Admiral not a bit. It was a time when more than diplomacy was evidently necessary to pacify the substantial looking man, whose heel gave out a sharper crunch, each time it came in contact with the decks. So Mrs. Simmons disappeared in the cabin, without further attempt, and the storm continued.

“I wish,” he cried, “I wish there had been a hole in the ice and she’d gone through. It would have been no more than she deserved.”

## “THE LITTLE EVA”

Then after a pause, “It’s a pity the bloodhounds didn’t catch her, it is indeed. If I was old Harriet Stowe you better believe I’d have fixed her.”

Suddenly he turned and looking up, caught the man in the wheel-house with a broad grin on his face. “That’s right, that’s right,” he roared. “No sympathy for me on board this boat. Here we are with an important engagement at our next stop and no Eliza; and you there grinning at me like the skeleton of a skinned cat.”

The wheel-man made no answer, though he did try to coerce his face into solemnity, and the admiral went forward and throwing himself into a chair moodily gazed down into the water as if contemplating self-destruction.

Vessels fearfully and wonderfully made had plowed the waters of old Michigan, but if a sister ship to *The Little Eva* wetted her sides there, the unsalted sea remembered it not.

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

Her crew was recruited not from the hoary-headed, grimy-faced men known as lake sailors, but from those who were wont to tread the boards of the stage rather than those of a ship. Her history as well as that of Peter Simmons, her owner, and by courtesy called, The Admiral, was known along the lake shore.

Simmons had never known any life but that of an actor. He was proud to tell of his *début* at the tender age of three years, and how he had appeared as one of the children of the memorable village of Falling Waters. That was several decades ago, but through the strife and conflict of life, and Simmons had known little else, he had wooed fortune only through the art of the thespian. In his younger years, when a more rugged school of acting was in favor than now obtained, he had had considerable success. For the last decade his triumphs had become less and less, until a combination of this misfortune, together with a grip of hard times which had swept the country, carried him

## “THE LITTLE EVA”

off his feet and left him bereft of fortune to begin life all over again.

His wife, who had shared all his vicissitudes without a murmur, cheered him and his own sunny nature warmed to life the spark of courage still hidden in his heart, and gathering a company of barn-stormers he set about producing what he denominated on the bills as “A grand and satisfying presentation of the noble, moral drama, Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” He shared the conviction of most actors that on the judgment day someone would have to kill “Uncle Tom” with an ax and this, with the fact that there were no author’s royalties to pay, made it a welcome vehicle to retrieve his fortunes which had so completely waned. He himself, not satisfied with the proud position of owner and stage manager of the company, also preëmpted the title rôle and appeared nightly as well as at several matinées as Uncle Tom. Mrs. Simmons appeared as Aunt Ophelia at one time during the evening and

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later as Emmeline. Timothy Holcomb, who was at present presiding at the wheel, not to be outdone, enacted the triple rôles of George Harris, Mr. St. Clair and Simon Legree. A sister of Mrs. Simmons was satisfied with the part of Topsy, while Lawyer Marks, Phineas Fletcher, Eliza, Little Eva, and some dozen other characters in the drama were divided up between a half dozen, who glided from part to part with all the grace and celerity of the lightning change artist.

Despite all this display of brilliancy, Mr. Simmons and his company had had no great success during their first seasons, and they had simply clung to Mrs. Stowe's creation for the same reason the drowning man clings to the straw;—there was nothing else to cling to. Two years before the time of which we write, a change had come in the tide of ill-fortune that had threatened for so long to devour Mr. Simmons and all his belongings. A pious and rich uncle of his had died, and though he willed

## “THE LITTLE EVA”

his fortune to found a college that he believed would make the name of Thaddeus Simmons refulgent to the youth of all succeeding generations, he did not forget his nephew, whose person and profession he had, to say the least, held in the deepest distrust. At one time the deceased had been connected with a dredging company, and though he had severed his relations with the firm long before for some reason, now never to be discovered, an old dredging scow remained in his possession. This he left to his nephew with the worthy wish that with it he might earn a more honest livelihood than he was doing around the country in an occupation that reeked with sin.

It so happened that the same mail that brought Mr. Simmons news of the loss of his valued relative was a messenger of a similar import to Mrs. Simmons. She, too, had an uncle, though he was neither rich nor pious. He had departed this life and made her his sole heir. Her inheritance consisted of a saw-mill

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some few miles out of Chicago, in a suburb where it was a crime to cut down a tree and consequently business in the saw-mill line was dull. Moreover, the saw-mill was on leased ground, the lease of which had just expired.

An inspection of the property revealed that the only things connected with the business that were worth anything were the engine and boiler of the saw-mill, and then it was that Mr. Simmons was struck with a happy thought. A careful examination of the dredge scow of which he had become the owner showed it was fifty feet long by twenty-four feet wide and had a depth of some six or seven feet. The first thing Mr. Simmons did, or Admiral Simmons, as he was hereafter to be known on the lake, was to have the saw-mill engine and boiler brought to the slip in the Chicago River where the scow lay, and after planking the hull he placed the machinery in the stern. He then procured an old paddle wheel, from where is a mystery to this day, and it required no great



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expert in ship carpentering to make the proper connection with the engine. Then a deck was built across the heavy beams of the boat, which until now had been the only pathway across it, and upon this he built a deckhouse. The deckhouse he fitted up with bunks and, rude though it was, it was not entirely lacking in comfort. On top of the deckhouse, which was in the back part of the transformed scow, was the pilot house. The rest of the space below the deck was fitted up as a culinary department and a baggage room. The dining room was the free, open deck, on which was erected a shaky table on folding legs just before each meal and which at these times always had to be dried; for in the interim it was carefully folded up and hung over the side of the boat in the water. All this done, Simmons held a christening party and *The Little Eva* came into existence.

From this time Simmons was no longer the slave of hard-hearted corporations that required not a tenth but nearly all of his posses-

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sions to transport him and his company from place to place. *The Little Eva*, blessed craft, was gently and sometimes tediously propelled from place to place along the entire shore line of all the lakes; and Simmons could now look ahead and see the flood tide of prosperity bearing down upon him.

His genial soul had warmed and mellowed under all this and the first shadow to cross his horizon was to find that at the last stopping place the leading lady of his company, as she insisted on calling herself, one May Heggs by name, had fallen in love at sight with a butcher's clerk, which passion being reciprocated, had promptly led to matrimony, leaving the company without an Eliza to nightly cross the icy Ohio chased by a lonely St. Bernard, which was down on the bills as "a band of man-eating bloodhounds." The very next port was one where he had always been warmly received, and suddenly to lose one of the most valued members of his troop at

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this very point was too much for his good patience. Accordingly he stormed, while the rest of the people on board retreated to the cabin to conceal the amusement he occasioned by the unique method of displaying his wrath. Timothy Holcomb, the only one on the boat who knew how to do a trick at the wheel, was alone compelled to conceal his merriment, while he continued in the presence of his superior officer in naval rank, and his star in the dramatic world.

The Admiral continued to gaze steadfastly into the waters until his attention was attracted by a small sailboat bearing down upon *The Little Eva*. Its one sail effectually concealed its occupants. So distraught was Simmons with his troubles that he probably would not have taken note of the boat at all if it had continued on its passage without coming directly toward his boat. Even after he had noticed it, he took it for granted that the boat would directly bear away, until suddenly a puff of wind brought

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

it so rapidly forward that he saw nothing could prevent a collision. He leaped to his feet intending to warn the intruder of the danger, when the sail veered slightly to one side and to his amazement he saw fast asleep in the bottom of the boat two comely young women.

HARVEST TIME IN A RIVER CITY







THE INDIAN TRAIL



## CHAPTER XII

### HARVEST TIME IN A RIVER CITY

IT was harvesting time and the Iowa river cities were filled with the men who early in the season had commenced their labors far to the south of St. Louis. As the great fields ripened, they had worked their way northward, welcomed by the thrifty farmers, who, without this slowly-moving army, would have been unable to gather the fruits of seedtime. The Mississippi was the avenue used by these harvest hands to make their way from place to place, and as fast as the yellow grain and golden corn was safely stored away under roof they pressed on to the North, where other fields were ripening and awaiting their coming.

Where this multitude came from, when it ap-

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peared in the early-maturing plantation of the Southland, and where it went to, when the last mellow wealth of the northern fields was gathered in, was a mystery. It was almost as if it was made up of men of hibernal natures, who, the summer's work being done, retired to some hidden nook in Nature's domain to slumber through the white days of winter. That it was cosmopolitan was written on the face of it. The jargon of every nation was the tongue of this army. The yellow heads of the Scandinavian peninsula, the swarthy-skinned men of Italy, the bewiskered Russ, the explosive Luxemburger, and the velvety-skinned Lithuanian, gregariously swarmed the valley, and rubbed elbows with the cockney whose ear was attuned to the Bow Bells, the rollicking, roistering son of Erin, and the raw-bone canny man who hailed from the land of the heather. Nor was the ebony face of the man in black wanting to complete this congress of nations.

Here in the vast mass of tumid humanity a

## HARVEST TIME IN A RIVER CITY

man might be as easily lost from his fellows as in a trackless forest. Divided for weeks over great stretches of country, and coming together again to move onward to other fields of labor, the identity of the individual was lost. It was only when these men stopped for what might be termed a breathing spell, in some of these cities that bordered the Father of Waters, that now and then a chance passer-by, a traveler mayhap from across the seas, would remember in the face of one of the men a look he had seen years before in the features of a scion of some ducal house or a resemblance to a man whose place of power had crumbled to ashes beneath some long-forgotten disaster. But such recognitions as these were few. For the most part these men were not the adventurous spirits that have known the satin and silk of life and have left it for the freedom of the road, but rather men of humble mind and mien, whose mission in life had always been, and always would be, to be numbered among the hewers of

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

wood and the drawers of water. And so they were not all gentle of manner, nor nice in action. When they found themselves on a Sunday in one of these river cities, many of them sought to free themselves from the spirit that bound them to the laborious drudging of the harvest and obtain relaxation in roistering.

It was among such surroundings that Tom Summers found himself at the end of his journey in the freight car. The train of which the car was a part had not gone to Chicago, as his sister expected, but had crossed Michigan to Duluth, and then had turned southward and had left the car with a number of others at Ravenport, where it was to be filled with part of the harvest the men were now about to go out into the surrounding country to gather. Tom was fortunate enough to get away from the vicinity of the freight yards without attracting attention; and discovering the meaning of the large number of men in the

## HARVEST TIME IN A RIVER CITY

city, he determined to join one of the harvesting gangs.

When he had left the island he had no money, but Thorpe had given him all he had when he had boarded the train at St. Ignace. This amounted to eighteen dollars. Thorpe had also procured for him a large bundle of food, so not having suffered from hunger he was but little fatigued by his journey. It had taken two days for the freight train to reach Ravenport, and though he felt stiff because he had lacked exercise, Tom was really in fine condition. The freshening air brought back hope, and his spirits began to rise. He believed that with the wide world before him there was little to fear. Surely he was now where recognition was well-nigh impossible. He was roused from these reveries by a hand touching his shoulder while a voice exclaimed, "I want you!"

Tom turned, a flood of dread forebodings rushing through his mind. It was a police-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

man. For a moment he was speechless, staring stupidly at the officer. "I want you," repeated the latter, releasing his hold on the shoulder and grasping Tom by the arm. "Come along with me."

"What for?" stammered Tom.

"Never you mind. You come with me," and the invitation was emphasized this time by a violent jerk. The thought of a struggle and flight came to Tom and it is probable that the officer saw the glint of it in his eye, for he called to another policeman near by. "This fellow is a bad one," he said. "Give me a hand." Between them a pair of handcuffs were slipped over Tom's wrists, and without further ado he was taken to the city jail.

There had been no question in Tom's mind but that his arrest had been ordered from Michigan and that he was charged with murder. Luckily no word of this escaped his lips and when he was thrust into a cell, which was already occupied by several other men, he soon

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found that it was the custom of the local authorities to hold an annual round-up during the harvest season among the strangers in the town. He was relieved to find that they were generally ordered out of town early the next morning. He knew enough about the practices of the law to know that, if he had been accused of anything as serious as murder, he would not have been placed in a cell with others but would have been confined alone.

When the men were first brought in they were not entered as arrests, but after some twenty or thirty were collected from the streets, they were all taken before the police sergeant, their names booked and their persons searched. The charge against them was vagrancy. At this Tom submitted willingly to the search, for he thought that when it was discovered that he was possessed of eighteen dollars they would release him at once. He was disappointed, for the sergeant put the money away in a drawer of his desk,

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as he entered Tom under the name of John White, the first that came to his mind when asked. Tom had been quiet under the questioning, for the thought that he might in some way betray that he was already a fugitive from the law, made him ready to endure the lesser injustice that he might not be discovered. It was when he found that, though he was possessed of money and had committed no overt act, the police were still going to hold him a prisoner until the morning, that the wrong caused him to forget his caution and impelled him to cry out, "I am no vagabond. You see that I have money. I am an American citizen. What right have you to hold me here?"

"You may tell that to the judge in the morning," replied the sergeant, and unwilling to listen either to Tom or several others who were expostulating, he ordered them all to be reconducted to the cells.

Tom's cell mates took the incident in surly



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but uncomplaining manner. This was not their first season as harvest hands, and evidently they were not unacquainted with the customs of the police, even if they had never been victims themselves heretofore. Tom was divided in his mind as to the best course to pursue. His natural indignation at his arrest made him wish to tell the judge of how unjustly he had been treated. Then there was the feeling that he would better be careful lest he awake inquiries that might spell calamity for him. His judgment told him that as the court would undoubtedly free him it would be best to bear these present indignities and go on his way satisfied because a severer fate had not been his.

Court was called early the next morning. The bailiffs who hurried the prisoners before the judge neglected to give them the coffee and bread that was customary. Tom did not bewail this. The sooner he was free to pursue his way, the happier he would be.

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The prisoners were arraigned in a half-circle before the bench and it was evident, from the preparations that the bailiffs were making, that their trials were to be brief. When all was ready the judge hurried in from an ante-room and taking his seat the administration of justice began. "First case," called the judge. "James Brown, vagrancy, your honor," called the bailiff. "What are the facts?" asked the judge. "This man was found wandering about town. He had no money and no residence." "Two hours to leave town or to jail you go," declared the judge. "Next."

Tom stood eighth in line and listened to a repetition of this in every instance. Not once was one of the defendants asked or allowed to give testimony. One man who attempted to speak was quickly silenced and the autocrat of the bench snarled, "One word out of you and you go to jail now." To one who had a natural instinct for justice as strongly developed as Tom the scene was sickening, but again caution

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warned him silently to receive his banishment. The testimony varied for his case. "This man, John White, your honor," said the bailiff, "is a stranger here without work. We found eighteen dollars on his person, but we booked him as a vagrant."

"Fined sixteen dollars," snapped the judge. "Next."

For the first time it dawned upon Tom what his arrest had meant. With the fear that the citizens of Ravenport professed to have of the rough spirits among the harvesters, there was united a spirit of greed on the part of the city authorities to enrich their local treasury at the expense of these men. Those who had expended their money in the town were warned to leave at once. There was nothing more to be gained from them. Those who still retained a portion of their money were relieved of it in a manner that would have caused a blush of shame to mantle the face of an everyday footpad. The wickedness of it rankled in Tom's

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breast, but though he was impulsive to a degree, he was not so precipitate as to forget that in the hands of such men as these he was as a shuttlecock at the mercy of a battledore, and so he held his peace. True, he must resume his journey with almost all of his scanty store gone, for when his fine was paid but two of his eighteen dollars remained. Even here he counted without a knowledge of the crafty minds that had reckoned before him. The two dollars that remained after the fine was paid were also retained as the costs of the court. And so, when at length he was released, thankful that he had escaped with his life from such a nest of scorpions, he set out on the highway penniless, hungry and alone.

IN A NEW WORLD



## CHAPTER XIII

### IN A NEW WORLD

“WELL, if that doesn't beat Moses in the bullrushes,” ejaculated Admiral Peter Simmons, as he looked down upon the sleepers in the sailboat. The next moment the little craft struck the side of *The Little Eva* and the jar awoke the two girls, who, on opening their eyes, saw Admiral Simmons trying to steady their boat by grasping at the mast and at the same time calling to his crew to stop the engine. If *The Little Eva* had been making much headway the sailboat would have been inevitably overturned, but speed was not one of the strong points of *The Little Eva* and it required but little effort to stop her altogether. Admiral Simmons felt that here was an opportunity to vindicate his seamanship, and it

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was almost in a twinkling that he had these two daughters of the unsalted seas upon his deck and their boat trailing behind *The Little Eva*, securely fastened by a stout rope.

“Well,” said the admiral as he good-naturedly surveyed the two young women standing on his deck, “it looks to me as if we’ll have to call a court-martial. Asleep at your post, hey?”

Lettie,—for it is needless to tell the reader that the castaways were Lettie and Vivian,—replied, “We are indeed grateful to you, sir. We had a rough sea all through last night, and it kept both of us awake to manage our boat. This morning we planned to take turn-about at sleeping, but the exhaustion of the night was too much for us and we both must have fallen asleep.”

“What port do you hail from?” asked the Admiral, who delighted in the nomenclature of the sea. An answer to this question was saved them by Mrs. Simmons, who bustled forward



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exclaiming, "Peter Simmons, don't you see these poor girls are weak with the cold? Come right down into the cabin. I'm going to put you both to bed and warm you up. The idea of being out all night in that topsy-turvy sailboat."

In truth they had spent two nights in the boat. It was the second morning since the little craft had sailed away from the island. Lettie had stocked the boat with provisions and they had not wanted for food, but the cold had brought them great discomfort. The breezes had been all in their favor in bearing them away from the island, but for this very reason they had felt the chill of the north.

The second night it had blown almost a gale, and they actually suffered from not only the cold but the waves, which every now and then would come sweeping over the stern of their boat. In these two days and nights spent together on the great waters, Vivian came to depend greatly on Lettie's reliant spirit. There

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also came to her absolute conviction that her brother would never suffer ill at the hands of this girl. Whatever the object of her quest in seeking him might be, Vivian intuitively knew that it was for Tom's good. This was enough to win the confidence and devotion of the island girl. And so her diffident heart in these hours that seemed so full of peril and trouble, leaned heavily on the sympathy and support of her companion. Lettie, silent and reserved herself, was unflinchingly brave, and no obstacle appeared too arduous for her spirit to surmount. In the moments upon their two-day journey on the lake, which had been the most trying, she had never quailed once.

Mrs. Simmons hurried them below deck and soon they were in comfortable berths with blankets piled over them and steaming coffee served to them by her own good hands.

"Goodness knows," she ejaculated, "the Admiral would have kept you there on deck until you were plumb dead. I never did see a man

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that liked to talk like he does. You'd a' thought his wits had gone a wool gathering." And so the good woman bustled about omitting nothing that might add to their comfort.

The cold had almost eaten to their very bone; and the treatment that Mrs. Simmons gave them was exactly what they needed. Under its influence they were soon both sound asleep.

An adventure of any kind always appealed strongly to the Admiral's love of the romantic, which was well developed, and the rescue of the distressed maidens especially did so. His whimsical mind was filled with thoughts of knights of old and the golden deeds of fabled story and he strode his deck after his wife had conducted them below, his heel coming down with unusual vigor on the deck. The captain of an ocean bark could not have been happier after some great bravery at sea than the Admiral over his latest feat. And while he thought of it and of where they might be bound there suddenly came a new thought that hugely

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elated him. He would have rushed below in his enthusiasm if Mrs. Simmons had not appeared above deck at that moment. He clasped her in his arms and waltzed her around several times, shouting all the while, "I have it now! I have it!"

"Well, I should say you had," declared his wife, trying to pull away. "I declare, Admiral, one would believe you had been drinking."

He answered her allegations by smacking her soundly on the cheek and then executing a double pigeon wing. This completed, he struck an attitude.

"Will you tell us what it is all about?" demanded Mrs. Simmons.

"I've found an Eliza," declared the Admiral.

"Found an Eliza? Where?"

"Why, in one of these two young women. It's like bread cast on the waters coming back."

"I don't believe, Admiral Simmons," replied his wife, "that you have been casting any

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young women on the waters or into them either, but I can see some hope in your idea."

"Hope," shouted the Admiral, "hope? Well, I should say so. Why, it would be ingratitude for them to refuse. The only question is, which shall it be?"

"The dark one, of course," said his wife; "she has enough confidence. The other girl is a beauty, but her complexion doesn't fit Eliza, and I believe an audience would scare her to death."

"We could make the complexion fit, easy enough," replied the Admiral, "but you cannot fit confidence on any one that comes along. That's something we must consider."

"Some shows have two Uncle Toms and two Topsyies," suggested Ella Brown, Mrs. Simmons' sister, who was the Topsy of the company. "Why can't we have two Elizas?"

The other members of the company who were gathered around declared this a capital idea until the Lawyer Marks reminded them that if

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they had two Elizas they would have to have two of the others in order to preserve the artistic balance of the company. The Admiral scented danger in this at once. To double his company meant he must double his pay-roll and this was not at all to his mind. "Pshaw," he said, "that dark girl that did the talking, she's the one. I know an actress when I see one and she'll make a great Eliza and a great Eliza she'll be. That's settled."

"It isn't settled by her," said Mrs. Simmons, "and to-morrow night we arrive at Port Buffington. We'll have a good house there and we must give a good show."

"We'll all persuade her," said Ella Brown, "and she'll do it anyway. Who ever saw a girl that didn't want to go on the stage?"

It may be that there are those who might be able to have answered Ella's question, negatively, but among these itinerant actors such an avowal would have been like the doing of a miracle. The girls that crossed their paths were

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all ambitious to pass the dividing line made by the footlights.

And so it was when Lettie and Vivian at length awoke they found an eager crowd about them urging Lettie to take the part of Eliza in the play the next evening. Lettie's swift mind grasped the situation at once. Here was employment dropped at her feet when she was approaching the great world beyond with but scanty means. While she was seeking to avoid publicity rather than court it, this traveling about might bring her the more easily by some strange accident into touch with Tom. Admiral Simmons was prolific in his promises, if she would only accede. She and Vivian could both live on the boat and if she was seeking employment he could offer her more than inexperience could find in the city. He brushed aside the difficulties she offered. In his anxiety he forgot as did the others to question them more about their strange advent upon the boat. He only thought, would she accept?

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This Lettie did, and under the coaching of several members of the troupe she was soon studying the part of Eliza.



VIVIAN OF THE FOOTLIGHTS



## CHAPTER XIV

### VIVIAN OF THE FOOTLIGHTS

THE next two months passed very swiftly for the two girls whose entrance into a world new and strange to them had been so sudden. Artistic requirements in the Admiral's company were simple and Lettie was found to be equal to them. Vivian helped by caring for the costumes of the company as well as with any other task which came to her hand. In the plantation scene, which was the tour de force of the play, she even appeared on the stage as one of the cotton pickers. She had remonstrated at this when it was proposed to her, but the Admiral was so urgent that she gave way. It was a trial at first for her to appear before an audience, though her part required little action and contained not one line

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for her to speak. The season was one of great prosperity for the company. The little cities and towns welcomed "Uncle Tom" and his cabin as if the ancient play were a new claimant from a metropolitan success. The Admiral grew happier and stouter than ever as the star of his fortunes rose higher and higher in the sky.

"One more season like this," he was wont to chuckle, "and we can give our farewell tour, though heaven knows what I should do if I were to divorce myself from my art."

With all the other members of the company, Vivian and Lettie were on the best of terms. The life was a hard one, with its constant moving from place to place, and there was little time between engagements for else than rest. The little family of the stage and sea had scant time to visit with each other, for no sooner was one date fulfilled than there came the work of gathering together their possessions and making the next port with all possible speed. The

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spare moments were given to sleep and preparation for the next curtain to go swinging toward the flies.

Vivian and Lettie spoke but little of the hope that each bore in her heart that somewhere, sometime, they would find Tom, but it was ever their dream. That Tom was a wanderer on the face of the earth, friendless and alone, was the thought that saddened Vivian more and more as the days passed. Sometimes breathed deep in her heart, sometimes trembling on her lips, but there always, was the prayer that she might find him, and then go away to some place with him where they both would be forever safe from molestation. Of Lettie's quest for her brother she seldom thought. It was only for his good, this was a settled conviction; but once the quest was fulfilled the strange, silent, reliant woman would go her way, for whatever had been the strength of the passion Tom had shared with her, the blood of a father forbade eternally its further protraction.

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Again at times there would come into her vision her island home. Tears filled her eyes as its white cliffs and trees bending in the soft breezes came before her. Must she ever be an exile from its shores? Should she never again tread its beloved paths or listen to the wind as it hummed and whirled across its face? What had she done that life had been so unkind to her? It was reflections like these that filled Vivian's mind during these busy days that went by so quickly they seemed to take to themselves wings.

It was at the end of the two months that Lettie found herself one night unable to take up her part. For a week she had been struggling with a cold that grew until she found herself in the clutches of a raging fever. She would have attempted the part at all hazards if Mrs. Simmons had not recognized that such an effort was too much for her, and firmly led her away to bed and medical treatment. Admiral Simmons acknowledged the justice of the deed,

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though he was thrown into despair. The house was crowded. The hour for the curtain to rise was at hand. To return the people their money and send them away meant a loss he did not relish. He paced about the stage and dressing-rooms, watched by his sympathetic company, trying to solve the problem to which there seemed no solution at hand. Finally he stood in the center of the stage and cried, "It's no use; we'll have to send them away."

Vivian, who had been studying in the wings, stepped upon the stage and said, "Mr. Simmons, I think I can take the part."

The Admiral whirled about like a top. "You, bless you, could you?"

"Yes, I've heard Lettie read the lines so often I'm quite sure I could, if you are willing to let me try."

"Let you try," cried the Admiral joyously; "why, if you just stagger through the part it's all we want. Well, this is luck!"

And so the players either arranged them-

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selves in their places about the stage or sought their dressing-rooms and the curtain went up.

It had cost Vivian all the courage she possessed to make her offer. She had a strong realizing sense of her obligations to Admiral Simmons and his company, and it was only a duty she felt was owed to him that steeled her to the task. She knew the words and to have kept silent when those who had been so kind to her were in need of her services would have been base ingratitude, and so suppressing her fears she clinched her teeth and essayed the rôle.

The opening scene of the play is familiar to the civilized world: the little cabin on the old plantation with Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe before the blazing log in happy content; the sudden swinging open of the door and entrance of Eliza, who tells of the sale of Uncle Tom and her boy, all the while clasping the little fellow to her breast,—such a mixture of sorrow, bitterness, fear, terror, pain, all thrown into the



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scales at once. When the cabin door swung back and Vivian came panting through, the spirit of the crushed mother seemed to seize her. She forgot the audience, the stage, the lights, and only saw the devoted slaves, who were her friends. She only remembered the mother whose boy had been sold away from her, and in piteous tones she told her story. The scene lasts but a moment; Uncle Tom's refusal to accompany her in flight, her own desperate resolve to brave any terror rather than lose her boy, her hurried farewell, the swinging once more of the door, and a wave of the hand as Uncle Tom holds aloft the fagot that lightens her out into the night, and then she is gone, but in that brief moment Vivian sounded the gamut of a soul in sorrow and swept everything along with her. It was not only the audience that was spellbound. The Admiral almost forgot his part of Uncle Tom, he was so carried along by the intensity of her acting. The members of the company not on

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during the act gathered in the wings and watched with rapt wonder. The curtain had scarcely fallen on the scene when Admiral Simmons went rushing after Vivian crying, "An actress, an actress right here in our midst and we didn't know it."

Vivian was embarrassed by the praise the other members of the company heaped upon her. She was not aware of having acted well. The moment she stepped upon the stage she felt herself sink into her part, and the audience was not there as far as she was concerned. Some of the sorrow she had known was in her voice, and as she recounted the woes of the poor slave woman in the lowly cabin it went out across the footlights and found an echoing chord in the hearts of the audience. It was seldom that the little city where the troupe was playing was visited by the best that dramatic art had to offer. Far from the centers of population, where the stars of the thespian world glittered, it must needs be satisfied with the

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crumbs that fell from the table, but the audience was none the less quick to recognize nature at the mirror, and it awaited the advent of the fugitive woman again with eagerness.

The scene at the river tavern is the one in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that gives the actress who enacts the rôle of Eliza what slight opportunity the part affords to display her talent. From the moment it opens until its culmination in the escape across the Ohio on the ice, it is so melodramatic that the utmost skill is necessary to make it convincing. There is really a world of feeling and pathos in the desperate struggle the slave woman makes for her child. Vivian came quietly upon the stage, clasping the child to her bosom. An outburst of applause greeted her, but did not disturb the equanimity which possessed her soul. She was not Vivian now. She was the fugitive whose part she enacted. She did not even think to wonder or to be astonished at the ease with which she crossed the stage or spoke her lines. It was as if she had

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found her place, and truly she had, for every movement she made was as natural as grace could make it. It may be unbelievable to some that a girl so timorous by nature could by one step become the effective artist of the stage. To those who have studied humankind it was only an added testimony to a demonstrated fact that when one comes at last to one's element, no matter how naturally timid the character, at once one is as much at home, as completely, as is the fish that swim the waters of the deep.

Eliza is on the stage but a moment when the rugged woodsman appears and discovers her trouble. With what trusting winsomeness she accepted his protection, and then at the sound of threatening footsteps how quickly she slips into the adjoining room, pinning all her hopes of safety in his loyalty to his promise! The slave drivers are intent on searching the house. Phineas, the woodsman, beguiles them with drink. It is necessary that she be out of the house at once, for her new friend sees that he

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cannot long delay her pursuers. She is in the next room and in his need to keep the men interested there is no opportunity to give her direction. Suddenly he begins the story of a slave woman and her child tracked by slave drivers. As he recounts the story Eliza takes the cue and follows his relation step by step. He tells of the poor woman cowed with fear in the next room, of how she silently creeps through the room containing her enemies while they, busy at the bar, fail to perceive her, and, finding her way to the door blocked, how she mounted the chair and then the table and disappears through the window.

Lovers of the drama know only too well that the true actor and actress do not always depend upon the spoken word. It is the movement of the body, the suggestion that comes from a pause or a slight action of the head, a hundred and one things that contribute to the effective portrayal of the character. No one had ever told Vivian this, nor could she have expressed

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in words the philosophy of it, but no veteran of the stage ever practiced it more completely than she did. As she appeared in the doorway, staggering under the burden of the child, and then ventured into the room, the audience was held spellbound for fear of her discovery. Her progress across the stage was almost an agony to them. And when she sprang lightly through the window and disappeared, a sigh of relief went up all over the theater, only to be succeeded by a murmur of disappointment when Haley, glancing out of the window, sees her fleeing toward the Ohio and sounds the alarm. And so it was when the scene changed and revealed the dark waters of the river swollen with cakes of ice. Not one word does Eliza utter as she takes her perilous way across the Ohio, and yet so splendidly did she carry herself in this scene, as melodramatic as any on the stage, that the house rose at her. The curtain rang down amid a perfect thunder of applause.

If her friends in the company had been

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amazed at her success in the first scene, they were now almost transported. There is much talk of thespian jealousy, but surely it found no place here. The moment the curtain hid the audience from view, they were upon her with a perfect avalanche of joy. Mrs. Simmons held her in her arms, the tears glistening in her eyes. "Oh, you little darling," she said, "you little darling, what an artist you are." The other members of the company patted her and covered her with confusion so rich were they in praise. As for the Admiral, all that he could do was to caper up and down the stage cutting a pigeon wing here and there and crying, "An actress, by jove, an actress."

All this time the applause was continuing on the other side of the curtain and it would not be satisfied until Vivian had been led one—two—three—four—yes, five times to blush and bow to those whose hearts she had won.

But once again does Eliza appear in the play. This is where once more under the protecting

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care of her husband, George Harris, who, too, has escaped from his master, compassed about by the rocks of a mountain defile, they fight the battle that brings them victory and then escape to Canada. Eliza here has little to do, but the audience could not forget her acting and welcomed her when the curtain rose, and sent her on her way to the far north when it fell, with more outbursts of applause.

When the curtain fell for the last time that night and as the crowd filed out of the theater, all talking of but one thing, the winsome grace and beauty of the little actress, the Admiral gently led her to the stage, where the company was gathered, and with a majestic air none could assume better on occasion, yet with benevolence beaming on his brow, he declared, "Companions, let it be long remembered that the good King Thespius has this day crowned this maiden fair as a princess royal and heir apparent to his throne."



THE FACE OF A FOE



## CHAPTER XV

### THE FACE OF A FOE

VIVIAN left the theater alone and hurried toward the pier as soon as she could escape from the adulations of her friends. The equanimity with which she faced the footlights disappeared when the curtain fell, and her embarrassment grew as the praise increased. It was but a short distance to the landing where the boat was secured, and her mind was so taken up with the events of the evening that her usual timidity, which would have prevented her venturing forth alone, was forgotten, and after having hurriedly dressed for the street she slipped out of her dressing-room and outdoors unnoticed by the others, who were busy themselves in doffing the costumes of the play.

The theater was on the business street of the

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town, which led directly to the water's edge, whence from all of the Great Lakes, vessels came daily. Vivian had come within a block of the lake when as she passed under an electric street lamp she became conscious of someone crossing the street toward her. The form of the man seemed familiar, and as she gazed she saw it was Jim Hester. For a moment she hesitated, and then seized with a fear that was unreasoning she darted straight toward the end of the street and out on the great pier. Panic-stricken, she thought she heard the heavy footsteps of Hester hurrying after her and every moment she thought she felt his hand upon her shoulder. A lake steamer was just casting off as she bounded on the pier. In her agony of terror she sprang upon its deck, which a moment later was entirely free from the dock, and then fainted dead away and would have fallen back into the water if a sailor had not caught her.

When she came to her senses the lights of the

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little lake town were growing dim in the distance and she found that those aboard the steamer had simply taken her for a belated passenger who had fainted from over-exertion in catching her boat. This belief she was quite willing for them to retain. She paid her fare to Chicago, which she found to be the boat's destination, and securing a stateroom she tried to collect her thoughts, which had been so rudely scattered by this latest adventure. It was difficult for her to do this. All of the old fear that she would be taken back to Mackinac to face an inquisition which would worm her brother's confession from her arose. That Hester was on this mission and had traced her to this point she did not doubt. That he had fortunately been unable to follow her on the boat was a comfort, but how could she know but what he already was tracing the boat by some other means and that at its very first stop she would be confronted by emissaries of the law, to whom he had telegraphed, or perhaps he might be able

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to take some fast train and reaching one of the boat's stopping places, ahead of her, confront her there and denounce her as one with whom the law had to do?

And so, torn by conflicting doubts and fears, she tossed on her couch and the sun had commenced to tinge the waters of the lake with its first rays before she at last sunk, exhausted by her mental struggles, into an uneasy sleep.

Meanwhile, Hester was far away on another lake steamer, little dreaming that he had been so near the sister of his rival. He had searched every nook and corner of his old haunts in Canada for Lettie, believing firmly she had taken refuge there, until at length convinced he was mistaken he had returned in a very ill-temper to Mackinac, hoping to hear some word of her there. Here he could learn no news of either Lettie or Vivian, though he did find the island folks wondering at the whereabouts of George Thorpe, who had left shortly after the two girls disappeared.

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Hester did not linger long on the island. He found his popularity, which had never been great, had still further waned, and so finding employment on a lumber boat he, too, bid farewell to the fairy isle. His boat had stopped for a load of lumber at the town where the Admiral and his company were playing, and Hester had spent the day there close to Lettie, whom he had traveled so many miles to find. He had even thought of attending the theater in the evening, but fate, so strange in its dealing with men, had turned his steps elsewhere, and all unknowing an opportunity to gratify his quest, for the time being, slipped through his fingers. At the very moment he met Vivian his mind was full of the island tragedy, and more particularly of Lettie, whom he was mentally resolving to make suffer when he once more closed his fingers upon her. And strange fate foiled him again that evening, for a little while after he passed Vivian he drew close to the Admiral's craft, where Let-

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tie was lying on a sick couch, though unlike Vivian, Lettie was as ignorant of Hester's proximity as he was of hers. It was but a little later than this that his boat sailed to the north, and in his sullen mind never did chance even whisper how it had fooled him.

Though it was unusual for Vivian to leave the theater alone, the fact was less noted, for she was in the habit of accompanying Lettie, and Lettie was not there to-night. But when they sought her on the houseboat to continue their congratulations and talk all over again the triumphs of the evening, she was not to be found. They did not wish to alarm Lettie and as long as they dared they withheld Vivian's absence from her, but as morning came and neither their vigils nor those of the authorities of the town, whose help they had enlisted, were rewarded, they were forced to turn to the sick girl and ask if she knew of the whereabouts of her missing friend. Of course, she did not and their anxiety was increased.



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All the next day was spent by the members of the company in the search, the engagement in the next town being foregone, but when night again came they gave up in despair, and leaving the matter in the hands of the officers, who promised faithfully to continue the investigation, they moved on.

Lettie was well enough to resume her part, though only her sense of duty to the Admiral and her knowledge that anything she herself could do to find her friend was probably useless, prevented her from remaining behind. She was responsible, she felt, for Vivian's absence from home, and this added to her burden. Moreover, a tender friendship had grown between the two girls, and this added to the ache of the loss.

As the weeks passed and they journeyed from place to place with no word ever coming from Vivian, most of the company came to believe she was dead. So loyal were they to the young girl whose friendship they had shared that

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none of them ever for a moment charged her with deserting them. And not knowing of her enemy, who had appeared in her path so suddenly and frightened her away from them, they could reach no other solution.

A STRANGER IN A GREAT CITY



## CHAPTER XVI

### A STRANGER IN A GREAT CITY

IT was almost dark the second afternoon when the lake steamer with Vivian as a passenger reached its pier on the Chicago River. It was one of those smaller craft that plied along the shore line of the lake, carrying as well as passengers considerable freight, most of which consisted of fruit. Its passage therefore had been more tedious than that of the larger steamers, which touch but one or two points in the sweep of the lake from the straits to the river, and which equal in time taken for the journey but one full circle of the sun. As the boat stopped at port after port, and no one armed with authority appeared, Vivian's spirit rose. With each stop it became more and more evident that for some reason Hester had not

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tried to follow her in this way. As her courage grew she ventured from her stateroom to the dining room, but such food as she ordered she partook of hurriedly, fearing there might be someone on board from the island who would recognize her. Her fears were unnecessary on this score, though her sweet and winsome face, pale and troubled as it was, did not fail to attract attention, but she gave no one an opportunity to gain her acquaintance. As the boat neared its landing in the great city some of her anxiety returned, for it was possible that Hester or some messenger of his, might be awaiting her there. With this thought she hurried down the gang plank and away from the dockyard, her heart beating with trepidation.

It seemed too good to be true that she had really escaped Hester. Momentarily, she expected the touch of his hand upon her arm. Every step behind her, she feared might be his.

Vivian's spirit was not that of a coward. Inexperienced as she was, and unequal to the

## A STRANGER IN A GREAT CITY

hurly-burly of the noisy world, she still would have been brave, if the troubles she sought to avert, had been her own. It was because of the hurt she feared might come to others she loved, that she was sick with terror at the thought of the man from whom she fled. Her courage, which had grown on the boat, again returned as she reached the street and none had sought to detain her.

In a few minutes she found herself on a broad avenue, given largely to trade. For the first time in her life she was in a real city, and the height of the great buildings was awe-inspiring to a mind so unaccustomed to such sights. In the fast falling dusk they seemed like mountains, but mountains without the trees and bushes and green life that smooths their grim majesty into beauty. There were hundreds of people hurrying along on both sides of the streets, but she had never felt so unutterably alone in all her life. Everyone was in mad haste. They seemed to be so self-centered,

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so impervious to every interest but their own, that the heart of the island girl failed her when she thought of asking any direction.

As she went on, the street became more crowded with vehicles of every description, while overloaded street cars passed on their way with noisy clangor. The sidewalks were swollen almost to congestion with the hurrying throng, and all served to add to the girl's bewilderment. On the island the booming of the waves against the cliffs, when the winds rose in the straits, had been like solemn music to her, but this noise had no melody in it, it was harsh, cruel and terrifying. Seeking to escape it she turned from the street into another, only to find the whole thing repeated. She kept on because to her simple soul there seemed nothing else to do, and by turning from one street into another she at last found herself in a quieter part of the city.

Vivian's head was throbbing with the nervous strain, while her feet ached, for they had



## A STRANGER IN A GREAT CITY

covered miles since she had left the steamer. It was growing dark. Three hours had passed since she had started on her aimless quest. If she had known the city she would have recognized the portion where she found herself as having once upon a time been the home of its first citizens. To her unsophisticated mind these old mansions were still impressive, but for years the grade of tenants had been on a descending scale in ownership of goods and chattels, and the edifice where once the society of the city had been wont to assemble was now given up not to one family, but to five—eight—ten, as the case might be, and the size of the house warranted. Fretted within and worn without, she gave little attention to these things. Vivian realized she must find a place to spend the night, but where and how she did not know. When she had fled onto the little steamer she had a small sum in her possession. The last of this had been used in paying her expenses to Chicago. She would not turn to the police, one

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of whom she met every now and then, for always was recurring the old dread of having her identity discovered and being taken back to the island to testify against her brother.

In her long wanderings, she thought many times of her friends of the mimic world, who had been so kind to her in these recent months. What would they think of her disappearance? Would they believe she had willfully deserted them? Again and again, there recurred to her some hope of returning to them. Her lack of means seemed an unsurmountable barrier to this plan. Now, she was too tired to plan, she must first rest.

But she had reached her shelter, though she did not realize it until she found herself beneath its roof. It was an old church, a landmark of the earliest days of the city's history. It was almost the first place of worship of any pretensions in the city, though now long since deserted by those who once found within it the consolations of religion.

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It stood back from the walk some fifty feet. The space in front of it had been used as a graveyard by some of the earlier communicants and a few of the tombstones were still standing, though many of them had fallen and time had obliterated most of their inscriptions. Along the front of the church, even with the walk, was an iron fence six feet high. This fence connected at each end with board fences, which ran to the rear of the church and joined a fourth fence, which stood but a few feet back from the church, making a scant yard. To the left and in the rear of the church the space beyond the fences was used for a large lumberyard, while close to the fence on the right was a large warehouse.

When Vivian reached the iron fence in front of the old church her meager strength was almost gone. The gate that lead up the pathway to the portals of the church was ajar, and finding that she could go no further she passed through the gate and up the pathway, thankful

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to find a place to rest, even though it was on the stone steps of the church. As she reached the door the last ember of energy remaining flickered out and she fell forward upon the three steps and knew no more.

THE WITCH IN THE CHURCH



## CHAPTER XVII

### THE WITCH IN THE CHURCH

IF the old church on whose steps Vivian sought rest was deserted and almost forgotten by those who had once worshiped there, it was not uninhabited. Ten years before when the congregation had grown so in numbers and wealth, it was not satisfied with less than a more elegant house of worship in a more refined part of the city, the trustees endeavored to rent or sell the property to some of the foreign populations which were coming into the neighborhood and which were not quite so exacting in their requirements of a place to worship God. They had succeeded once in renting it in this way, but the history of the second congregation repeated that of the first, and as it grew out of its first estate of humility and economy

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it, too, moved away into better and more fastidious quarters. After this the trustees had endeavored to sell the church, but the section steadily deteriorated and so finally, as the taxes were not high, they had simply held on to the property hoping that eventually something would turn up and remove what had become a veritable white elephant.

In the first days of the desertion of the church they found that leaving it without attention of any kind had been an invitation to the rougher element, which was gathering about it, to use it as headquarters for all sorts of deviltries, and when they learned that its unsolicited use was even being contemplated for a prize fight they decided to find a caretaker for it.

While they were in this state of mind a furrowed-faced old woman applied for the place. The lines and wrinkles on her countenance were so many that one could easily believe she was a hundred years old, though a pair of black eyes



## THE WITCH IN THE CHURCH

flashed a fire that betokened unquenchable vigor. She was nearly six feet tall and straight as an arrow. The trustee, to whom she applied and who had charge of the matter, had thought to ask her, when in answer to his first question he found she meant to live in the church alone, if she did not fear to do this, but after a few words he felt it unnecessary. He had found as grim a spirit as ever crossed his path. Nor did it seem probable, old as the woman was, that she would be unable to protect herself if the necessity arose. Her tall frame was wiry and though the flesh was scant her every movement suggested power. Of her past he discovered little. She would take the church in exchange for its basement rooms as a place of abode; she would see to it that it was protected from vandals, was not that enough?

He did find, however, that though she was not a gypsy herself she had lived for a time with gypsies, and this suggested to him the possibility of her using her quarters as a fortune-tell-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

ing place, and this he declared the church would not permit. The woman was quick to tell him that if she made the church her home she proposed to live her own life there; that he and his people could not expect too much for nothing; anyway, that if she wanted to tell fortunes she would. The trustee, who was anxious to get the matter off his hands, and who did not care much anyway what she did as long as she provoked no newspaper scandal, finally compromised with her, allowing her to do as she wished within her own apartments, but arranging that no sign or notice of her vocation should appear on the outer walls of the building. She shrewdly said that the less publicity she had the better it suited her purposes, and the bargain was struck. Since then she had done much as she wanted, for not once had either trustee or anyone else appeared to bother her, though it was close to three years that she had been their tenant. Nor did she miss by the absence of a sign upon her door. The fame of Mother

## THE WITCH IN THE CHURCH

Ann,—for only by this name, given out by herself, was she known,—grew and many came to discover through her reputed powers their future and what it held for them.

Mother Ann was alone in her apartments in the church, busily engaged in polishing some beautiful seashells of unique form and considerable size. From time to time she would stop to place a shell to her ear and then a shadow of satisfaction would cross her face. Suddenly she stopped, attracted by a sound from the entrance to the church. She rose muttering, "It may be someone who wishes me to draw his planet," and reaching for a lamp she made her way to the door. On opening the door she at first saw no one. Then she lifted the lamp above her head and stepping out on the steps peered into the darkness. A moan at her feet caused her to look down and discover the form of the unconscious girl. A shake of the shoulder brought no response. The soothsayer placed the lamp on the ground

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

and gathering up her unexpected guest carried her back into a room on the other side of the church from whence she had been at work, where she placed her on a couch. She then secured a lamp and holding the light so it would shine on the girl's face she examined it intently.

“She has been by the wind. I can see trouble there. Trouble, trouble,” she whispered to herself. Then she reached out and from a stand took a shell much like those she had been polishing in the other room. She pressed the conch to the brow of the girl for a moment and then placed it to her own ear. Listening intently to it, her face expressionless all the while, she seemed to read the story of the stranger and again she muttered, “Trouble, trouble, trouble.”

OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN



## CHAPTER XVIII

### OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

GEORGE THORPE was hastening along through one of the business thoroughfares of Chicago as fast as a blinding snow storm would permit. A cold northeast wind had hurried great masses of snow clouds down upon the city and the white feathery flakes were falling faster than the street cleaners could cart them away. The city had become a familiar place to the stalwart young farmer, who had been there most of the time since he had left the island. All this time he had been searching for Vivian. Though he had received no encouragement and found absolutely no trace of her he persisted, nor would he leave the city, both because he knew of no better place to seek the island girl and because he had an un-

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explainable conviction that if he found her at all he would find her there.

It had been a weary and disheartening search, with never the least trace to encourage him. Every morning he had arisen with fresh determination and every evening, as tired as a dog, he had gone to bed, his mind as resolved as ever, to continue his search to the end.

Thorpe had never realized the warmth of his affection for Vivian until he had lost her the morning he went in search of the boat to carry her away from Mackinac. Since that time it had been almost irresistible and though he did not know her attitude toward him, he was anxious to discover her and give her the protection he felt she needed. At times he trembled when he thought of the frail girl alone in the world as she probably was. That was a phase of the case he tried to banish from his mind. He had seen sights since he had come to the big city that had turned his blood cold and the very thought that she might be surrounded



## OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

by these dangers drove him wild. So he was constantly on the move hoping against hope that eventually his persistence would be rewarded. At times Thorpe believed Vivian was dead and despair would seize him. Then he would shake off this fear and renew his hunt.

. One day he stopped at a crossing for a moment to wait for an opportunity to get through the procession of passing vehicles, which were having difficulty with the banks of snow and the sharp wind. As he stood there two women and a man passed him and made an effort to break through the carriages and reach a street car. One of the women slipped on the icy pavement and fell prone on the ground. Thorpe sprang past her two companions in an instant and helping her to rise almost dragged her from beneath the hoofs of two truck horses. The woman for the time being was too bewildered to say anything to him, but the man and woman with her commenced to thank him volubly, when the woman stopped

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short in her thanks and cried, "Why, it is George Thorpe!" and he saw at once it was Lettie Manette.

It was like a benediction to both of them to meet someone from the island, though George did not dream that Vivian had left with Lettie and that she had been with her for weeks after their disappearance.

Lettie followed her exclamation with, "George, have you found Tom? Do you know where he is?"

"No, I have searched for him and for his sister Vivian for months but can find no trace of either."

Here Admiral Simmons, for it was he, having succeeded in soothing his wife, whom Thorpe had rescued, commenced to thank him again, and this time he was joined by Mrs. Simmons, who had found herself more frightened than hurt. Lettie introduced them and on finding that Thorpe was an old friend of Lettie from the island they insisted that he

## OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

should accompany the three of them to the Simmons home on the west side of the city. Thorpe was ready to do this, especially when Lettie told him that though she did not now know of Vivian's whereabouts they had left the island together and had been together for some time afterward.

They had reached the Simmons home before Lettie finished her recital of what had taken place since the night George had left Vivian concealed in Sugar Loaf. He learned now of Vivian's experience after he had left her and how she outwitted the two ruffians. Lettie's story of their experience on the lake and of their meeting Admiral Simmons and his people and of their subsequent life as members of a dramatic company was all surprising. Lettie's sickness had prevented her from seeing Vivian's triumph on the stage, but the Admiral told of it graphically, though he could not do so calmly.

“Just to think,” he declared to George, as

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

he had to the members of his family and troupe many times since Vivian's disappearance, "that we should have found a young girl with remarkable powers as an actress and then the very earth should seem to open and swallow her."

Lettie told of the subsequent search for Vivian. The Admiral had hired several men, who spent days scouring the country round-about but they discovered absolutely no trace of the lost girl. Mrs. Simmons declared that she had believed from the first that when Vivian had sought to reach their boat that night alone that she had made a misstep and had fallen into the lake and that the currents had carried her away. The Admiral and Lettie were unwilling to believe this. They could not bring themselves to give up forever their friend, though every other avenue of reasoning only brought them to a dead wall.

In the ordinary case the problem would have been solved by believing that Vivian had for

## OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

some unknown reason decided to leave them, but to those who knew her this was impossible. Lettie, especially, had come to know the island girl and had long ago recognized how foreign her spirit was to that of the great world. Lettie knew that to Vivian the great, rushing, tumultuous world was like an unexplored and wild jungle which babes playing in the woods had come upon, and that its effect upon her was much the same as the effect of the unknown and dark forest would be upon the wandering infants. No daughter of the island in the straits had ever drunk more deeply of its sweet spirit and this new life into which she had been thrust was so strange to all that she had ever known that she could not grasp it. All this had been revealed to the more experienced girl in the weeks she had been with the sister of Tom Summers.

After the party was settled in the Simmons home, George soon learned what there was to know of Lettie's experience after the disap-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

pearance of Vivian. The loss of Vivian had so stirred her that she had thrown off her sickness and was able to resume her place in the company. During the autumn and the early winter they had continued to play the small towns of northern Wisconsin, but when the lake had commenced to fill up with ice and the houseboat could afford them but little protection against the strong breezes and waves of old Michigan, the Admiral had closed the season and returned to Chicago. It had been the most profitable one he had ever had and with the proceeds he was able to control a small theater on the west side of the city, and, strengthening his company, he gave stock company performances that thus far were meeting his every expectation.

Lettie had been given a place in this company and had become quite a favorite with the clientele of the house. She had made a slight change in her name, being known as Lettie Mann, for she deemed this precaution neces-

## OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

sary on account of Jim Hester, though she had not heard one word of him since she had left and the thought of him chilled her blood, iron-hearted though she was. The Simmonses had taken a great fancy to the reserved dark girl and had insisted on her sharing their home with them, the more so when they found she had nowhere else to go. This regard was mutual; for Lettie had come to know the sterling worth of her friends. To some extent she had intrusted them with her secret. She had explained that Vivian's brother had been in trouble and had left his home and that for this reason Vivian had been forced to leave, too, for fear of being used as a witness against her brother. She added a little to this explanation, but it was satisfactory to the Simmonses, who were of the kind that used no magnifying glass to pry into the affairs of their friends. Lettie was dear to them, as Vivian had been. That was enough.

They were greatly concerned, though, over the health of Lettie. As the weeks passed, in-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

domitable though she was, it became evident that something was wearing her spirit away. It was difficult to get her to acknowledge this, but they had finally persuaded her to see a physician. His diagnosis was not satisfactory even to himself, and they had made a second engagement with him. This time the medical man had said to Lettie, "Young woman, the trouble with you primarily is not physical. You have something that you are worrying about and the effort you are making to suppress your anxiety is wearing you out. I know you are holding yourself well in hand but I warn you that you'd better throw your trouble to the winds or there's going to be an explosion."

Lettie's friends were quick to see that the physician had struck the keynote and Lettie herself did not attempt to deny it, though she said nothing. It was on their return from the second visit to the physician that the accident occurred that resulted in them meeting George Thorpe.



## OLD FRIENDS MEET AGAIN

George was quick to discover all this himself, even while Lettie was recounting to him the events of the past months. To him it was an evidence of the trouble she had borne since the death of her father. He reasoned that no greater tragedy could come into a woman's life than to have her lover take the life of her father, and to have this come to a girl like Lettie, who under a calm exterior was capable of the strongest feelings, must be terrible. He pitied her with all his heart. But the word of consolation that she needed, with all his shrewdness, he knew not how to say.

There came to him in his talks with Lettie during the next few days a revelation of her eager desire to see Tom, a desire she had first revealed to him that night at the old fort, when they stood together under the starry heavens. What could possess her to be so anxious to see the slayer of her father? Obviously she did not desire harm to come to him. And though she did not reveal this desire by any specific

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

word it became more and more evident to George that this one thing was all she was living for. Why, he could not venture even a guess and so he tried to dismiss it from his mind.

THE VOICES OF THE SHELLS



## CHAPTER XIX

### THE VOICES OF THE SHELLS

WHEN Vivian recovered consciousness she found herself alone in the room where Mother Ann had carried her. It was some time before she could collect her thoughts sufficiently to remember where she had been when the faintness had seized her. The room in which she so strangely found herself was small and was evidently used for a bedroom. In addition to the couch on which she was resting there was a bed in another corner. The large windows were heavily curtained and gave her no information as to her whereabouts. The room contained, in addition to the furniture already mentioned, several rude chairs, a table and a chest of drawers. The floor was uncarpeted and all bore the evidence of either ex-

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treme frugality or quiet poverty. As Vivian's senses grew calmer she recalled how she had sought the shelter of the church steps for rest but this did not explain to her where she now was and how she had come there.

She arose from the couch and crossing the room opened the only door it had. Passing through she found herself in a hall, and from its appearance she at once recognized that she was probably in the church at whose door she had fainted. Across the hall was another door which was partly open and glancing through it she found it to be a room of much the same size and shape as the one she had left, though its furniture indicated it was used for a kitchen. The hall was quite long and between where Vivian stood and its end toward the back of the church its floor was so much lower that there were three steps connecting its front and back part. In front, the hall led into the entrance to the church and here, in a larger hallway, she found two flights

## THE VOICES OF THE SHELLS

of stairs, one on each side, which evidently led to the auditorium, which was upstairs. She turned the heavy knob on the front door of the church but found the door had been locked. As she stood irresolutely a low sound came to her from the other end of the hall. She listened and it grew into a solemn crooning, falling and rising in a weird rhythm. It was inexpressibly chilling to her, standing alone in the dark hallway. At times it would increase in volume, though it was never loud, and then it would almost die away into an awesome softness. It was as if the spirit of the gloom which surrounded her was muttering to itself its own uncanny secrets. Spellbound she waited for the appearance of she knew not what. But nothing came and at length the sound died away entirely and the silence and the dark shadows made her more lonely.

Vivian gathered all her courage and passed down the hallway to the door at the end. It opened easily at her touch and as she passed

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through it the crouching broke out again. She found herself in a large room, so large it might pass as a small hall. Its walls were heavily draped in black and its only light came from the other end of the room, where on a slightly raised platform Vivian's eye was caught and held by the figure of the fortune teller.

Mother Ann was seated on a throne-like divan which rose from the platform covered, as was everything in the room, by death-like black drapery. The throne of the witch, for such she seemed, was surmounted by a canopy from which hung a score of human skulls. To increase the weirdness, tiny lights had been inserted in these and from their cavernous sockets there came a green glow. On each side of the throne stood tables and these were covered with seashells of varying size and beauty, though all of them were of the chambered variety. Before the strange woman was a caldron over a charcoal stove, and into a bubbling mass which filled it she from time to



## THE VOICES OF THE SHELLS

time cast a handful of a powdery substance which flared up as it went into the pot and emitted a greenish flame. Each time she fed the caldron it sent forth unearthly shadows which scurried about on the dark walls. While she watched the boiling mass the woman kept up the moody intonation which had drawn Vivian to the room. She had entered so noiselessly that she was not observed, and where she stood the darkness was so thick that even the sharp eyes of the strange woman, glistening like black orbs in her aged countenance, did not seem to search out the intruder.

As the incantation continued Vivian had ample opportunity to scrutinize the face of the sorceress. The flickering light revealed that none of the softer virtues lurked there. It was a visage over which played the expressions of cunning, craftiness, cupidity, but of the generous feeling so often seen in the lineaments of women there stood out not a trace. Vivian, who now came in contact with the black art for

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

the first time, did not know whether the interest displayed by the strange woman was sincere or simulated. Her mind was so alien to the mountebank and all the singular practices by which this ilk deceives even itself at times that she was only held in terror by all she saw.

A gust of chilling wind came from somewhere and it bent the fingers of the flame in the caldron toward her and then she knew the woman had risen from the divan and was peering through the gloom of the room at her. Vivian could feel the eyes of the woman. They were penetrating and compelling eyes and they drew her toward the cloven tongues of the fire in spite of herself. Then the woman addressed her, but before she did so she selected one of the shells from those about her and pressing it to Vivian's brow, as she had done before in the outer room, she held it there for a while and then placed it to her ear.

"Listen, girl," she said, "the voices of the shell tell me strange things of thee. Thou art

## THE VOICES OF THE SHELLS

fair and young, still thou wantest a place to rest thy head. Under waving trees and near deep waters I can see where once thou didst abide. The sunshine is there no more. Thick clouds have passed over the place. Evil awaits thee there. And so in distress hast thou gone up and down the earth. Hark, the whispering in the shell grows softer. Thou hast been led to me. Out under the blue blanket I found thee. I have need of a companion. Art thou content to stay?"

To the trembling girl the words of the sorceress appeared to carry knowledge more portentous than they did. Vivian was ready to believe the woman knew all her past. Confused as her mind became she retained enough of her senses to comprehend the import of the invitation. She was being asked to stay with this awful being, who seemed to her as if she had risen from the pit, so frightful was her skill. The woman approached closer to her with outstretched hand as if inviting her into

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

communion with evil powers. She swayed back and forth for a moment and then for the second time lay senseless at the feet of the necromanceress.

THE WITCH'S SON



## CHAPTER XX

### THE WITCH'S SON

VIVIAN was ill for several days after the scenes she witnessed in the inner chamber of the witch woman, for so she had come to regard her. The strain had become too great for her to carry longer and all her strength had given way at once. When she came to herself she was again in the little room where she had been when she was first taken into the church. Mother Ann, less forbidding than she had been in the grewsome surroundings where Vivian had first seen her, was ministering to her in a rough way. Vivian realized in her weakness that she had come to a point where resistance was useless and, though not entirely free from the terror with which she had first viewed her strange attendant, she re-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

signed herself to whatever might come. The old woman had little to say to her, contenting herself in bringing her the brew of strange herbs to drink and giving her broths and nourishing foods from time to time.

When Vivian was able to sit up Mother Ann entered into conversation with her for the first time. She took a seat beside her and began by saying, "Girl, I have no care to pry into your concerns. The shells will tell me all I wish to know. And now that you are more familiar with this place, strange as it may be, I think the idle fears which possessed you are giving way. I want you to stay with me; for I need an assistant. If, as I have reason to believe, you are homeless and alone, what better can you do than stay? And if for some reason," the old woman continued furtively, glancing at her from under her eyebrows, "if for some reason you wish to remain in secret, where will you be better lost to the world than here?"



## THE WITCH'S SON

Vivian felt the force of the woman's remarks and if it had not been for her fears of the unseen world with which the woman seemed so closely in touch she would have readily assented, even grasped at the opportunity offered her. The woman seemed to read this in her hesitation and continued, "You need not be troubled by the mysteries. Nothing shall harm you. No matter what the mutterings of my enemies may be, I deal not with the black art. The voices of the shells gather for me and I but serve them. And if you do not stay with me, where will you go? Will that not be a problem for you to solve?"

It ended with Vivian's consenting to stay, though her compliance was not won at this first conversation. As she became more familiar with the surroundings she came to believe that for the present the course marked out for her by Mother Ann would be the best to follow. She knew of no way to get in communication with Lettie, or any of her friends

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

in the Simmons company. Believing that Jim Hester had traced her through the company was another reason why she would not have dared to make her whereabouts known to them if she had known their route. She felt herself completely exiled from the island. Many times during the past months she had longed to write a simple line to her mother. When she pictured her loneliness and sorrow, the agony of it had been almost unbearable. But there was ever the dread of the island authorities coming after her and extorting from her the words her brother had poured into her ear at the end of that last day she had spent on the cliff.

The strange woman was pleased with Vivian's agreeing to stay as her helper. It would be saying too much to represent that the harshness, inseparable from her personality, was lessened, but at least it was not directed at her. Their communications were altogether of the yea and nay variety. The dominant note

## THE WITCH'S SON

of the older woman was bitterness, of the younger, sweetness. Though they had nothing in common, they did not clash.

Vivian began her duties a week after she first came to the church. They were not difficult, her chief mission being to usher the visitors of the fortune teller into her presence. Evidently the fame of Mother Ann was spreading, for the number of those coming grew day by day. It is more than likely that the somber external with the few moss-covered grave stones and the iron fence lent a mystical shade to the place that decreased, not one whit in the minds of those who came, the auguries of its mistress.

If Vivian had been aghast at her first visit to the inner chamber of the church, it was because she was inexperienced and unsophisticated rather than superstitious. Once within the sanctuary of the fortune teller, her quick mind readily perceived that the skulls, ghostly lights, caldrons and incantation were but part

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of the machinery by which Mother Ann gained her effects. This knowledge lessened her fear and made her reconciled to her lot. What apprehension remained was due to Mother Ann herself, rather than her surroundings. There was no association between the two. When she was not busy with some visitor, the fortune teller was forever hovering over her fires, croning the hours away. After Vivian consented to remain, the witch had never again assumed as friendly an attitude as she did at that time. Her orders were few and having instructed Vivian in her duties she seemed to think she should carry them out with no further direction. Vivian had a feeling that as long as all went well she would have no trouble, but woe to her if she ever crossed the woman.

Irregular in most things, the priestess of the shells had regular hours for the reception of her customers, for she was a thorough believer in being fully prepared before she attempted to presage the future. Never was the key to

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the great front door turned until Mother Ann knew that every bit of paraphernalia of her office was in harmonious agreement with the spell she was about to spread. When the hour came Vivian, arrayed in a gown of black velvet and with a half mask covering the upper part of her face, took her station at the outer door, and received from each seeker the stated fee of admission before she guided them to the inner presence. She had not relished the costuming at first. It made her feel as if she were part of the imposture of the veiled room. But Mother Ann had insisted and she had given way. The mask was not at all unwelcome, for this had served to conceal her identity.

Vivian was never quite able to determine what her mistress did hear in the shells. For them she maintained a reverence. It was part of her duty to care for them, and as she grew used to polishing their surfaces she came to love them. They were of varied forms and hues. Those from the tropical seas were of a

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rare beauty. The story they told Vivian when she placed them to her ear was always of the sea and its islands. The voices that their owner pretended to hear never spoke to Vivian, but they nevertheless spoke a language the island girl could understand. For hours she would listen to the surging of the waters as they beat upon the shores of some faraway land. Mingling with their roar she could trace the pathway of the breezes as they marched on from tree-top to tree-top, as she had heard them do so many times in the woods that crowned her own island home.

If the shells brought homesickness and tears they also brought her comfort. She felt they were the only friends she had. At times she would take some of those she loved the most to the abandoned auditorium above. Here she was always alone, for Mother Ann never troubled to visit its empty pews and voiceless pulpit. Here the shells took on a softer tone. The sound of the waters was as it used to be on those

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quiet summer days when Vivian would lie prone upon the cliff and hear their gentle rippling come up from below. She would forget the musty furnishing of the deserted room, and would dream as she used to dream under the gorgeous sky of blue and gold. And so the days lengthened into weeks and the weeks into months.

One morning Mother Ann met Vivian and with unusual good humor she said, "I have a message from my son, whom I have not heard from this many a year. He is coming."

"When?" asked Vivian, with an inner sinking, for the harsh and menacing mother she knew could frame for her no favorable picture of her offspring.

"To-day sometime, and perhaps, my pretty, he may take a notion to you. He has an eye for a bit of calico."

This unexpected news was very disturbing to Vivian. She received it as a harbinger of evil. Try as she might she could not shake off the

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premonition that the coming of this man portended evil.

It was late in the afternoon when she heard the voice of the mother telling her to come down from the upper floor; for her son had come. With doubting heart Vivian descended. As she approached the room where the fortune teller was welcoming her son, she could hear her telling him, "Sure, she is a neat slip of a girl. You'll set your heart on her, I'm sure."

Vivian reached the doorway and entered the room. Seated by the table was Jim Hester. The recognition was mutual.

"By all the gods!" he ejaculated, "is it you?" And then he sprang to his feet. "Well, this is luck." Then turning he addressed the fortune teller. "Mother, I've been scratching the earth for this wench and some of her friends. How on earth did you come to have her here? There must be something in your infernal magic after all."

Then without waiting for an answer from



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either of them he crossed the room and grasping Vivian by the wrist he demanded, "And where is your brother and Lettie Manette? Tell me that, will you?"

"I do not know where they are, and if I did I would not tell you," retorted Vivian. "Let go of my wrist, you are hurting me."

"I'll hurt you worse than this if you do not answer my question. Where are they? Out with it," and he emphasized his demand with a cruel twist of her arm that brought out a scream.

"None of that, none of that," cried his mother, hurrying forward. "You'll rouse the neighborhood. Let me have the girl. She'll tell me."

Hester at his mother's touch released Vivian's arm, and then his mother demanded, "What is all this about, anyway?"

"About," answered Hester, "it's about a good deal. This girl's brother is wanted on the island for murder. He tried to steal away

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from me a woman I loved and, when her father interfered, he killed him. Now, her brother and the daughter of the murdered man have run off somewhere together.”

“That is not true,” cried Vivian, “they are not together.”

“So, ho, so you do know where they are, do you? Well, you are just going to tell me or I will know the reason why,” and he advanced menacingly toward her.

Vivian was nearer to the door than either of the others and as he approached she sprang through it and ran up the hall toward the front of the church. Reaching the vestibule, she tried the knob only to find the front door was locked. Hester was almost upon her by now, but she fairly leaped up the stairs that led to the floor above. Once inside the auditorium she slid a bolt and sank in a pew to regain her breath, while the two outside stormed and hammered to be let in.

The door quivered under the blows that Hes-

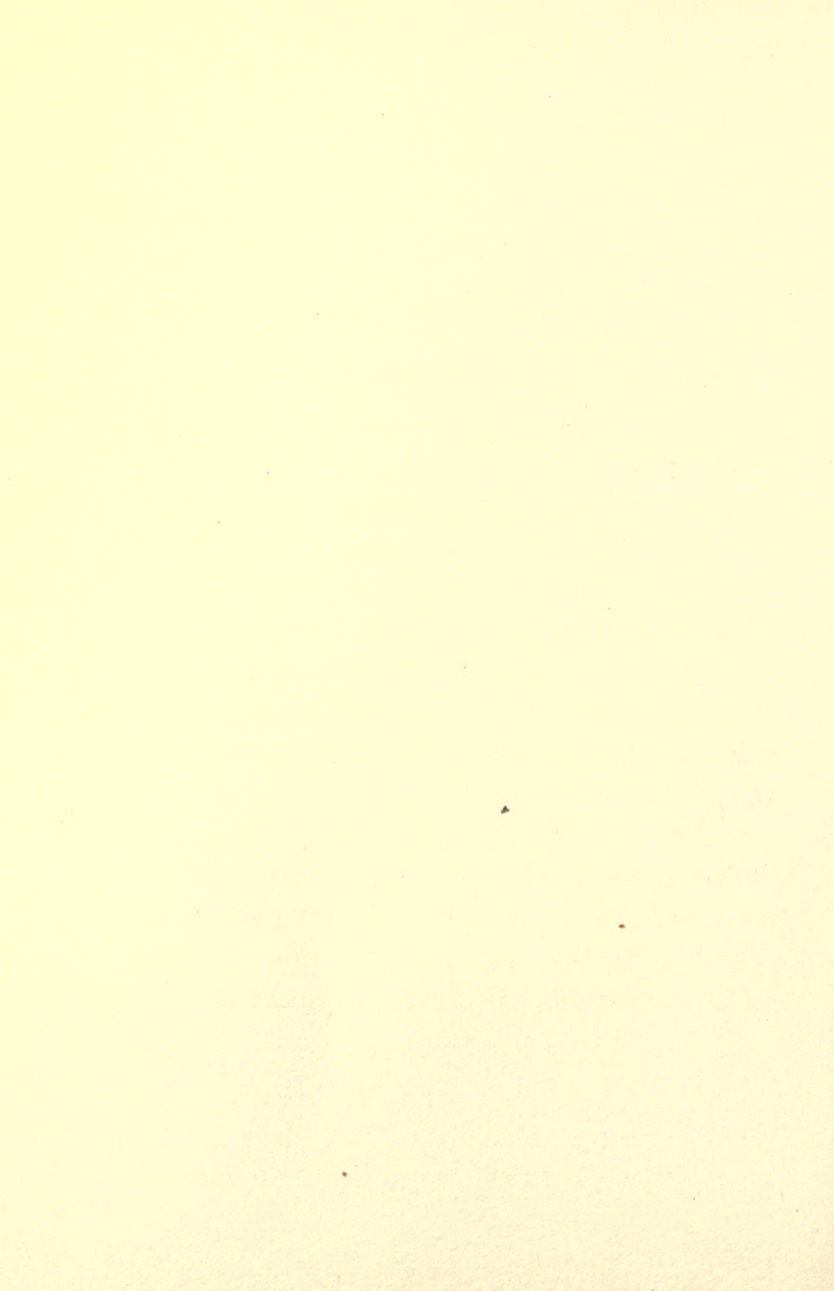
## THE WITCH'S SON

ter dealt, but the stout oak held. Then there was a crash of flying glass and Vivian looked up to see him coming through the transom over the door. She ran down the aisle while he was unbolting the door for his mother to get in. Vivian was lighter of foot than either of them and she led them a warm chase about the church. When each of her enemies selected an aisle and tried to run her down in this way, she bounded from pew to pew, sometimes running along the narrow railing that separated them in the middle and sometimes barely touching the backs of the pews as she jumped from one to the other. Her two pursuers were mad with passion by this time. Mother Ann had completely forgotten her caution and was screaming out anathemas of the lower world. Hester was too enraged to make any utterance, but murder gleamed in his eye. Thinking the way was clear, Vivian made a dash for the door, but the woman flung herself in her way in time to bar the passage. The girl turned to the pews

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again, but her advantage was lost, and Hester came leaping at her and before she could make the pew he had her in his clutches. She felt his fingers closing around her throat and as they did he gritted his teeth like a wild animal. She looked up into his face but she could read no mercy there.

THE STRUGGLE IN THE CHURCH



## CHAPTER XXI

### THE STRUGGLE IN THE CHURCH

THE Simmonses, personification of hospitality as they were, insisted that George Thorpe should stay with them while he continued in the city. He was glad to do this, for he felt that the interest which Lettie and he held in common was shared by them. Accordingly he transferred his effects from the hotel to their home. He had been with them a fortnight and each evening as he entered the door after a day of plodding the city, Lettie's eyes would meet his with the ever questioning query of his success. It was fortunate that her work as a member of the stock company was as arduous as it was. Each week a new part had to be learned and this helped to take her mind

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away for a time, at least, from the lost brother and sister.

One night after the performance they were gathered about the family board for the customary midnight luncheon, and George was recounting his experiences of the day, and declaring he was almost discouraged, when Mrs. Simmons declared, "I've found a way. Why not go to the fortune teller?"

All but Lettie laughed at the suggestion, but Lettie seconded Mrs. Simmons. "Everything else has proved futile. Why not?" she echoed.

"Laugh, if you want to," continued Mrs. Simmons, "but one of the members of the company has been to a woman that has told her wonderful things. She does it with seashells."

"I do not want to hear wonderful things," declared George; "all I want to know is where Vivian and Tom are. If there is any witch that can tell me that, she will be welcome to all I possess. Why, I cannot sleep nights with the thought of that innocent girl all alone



## THE STRUGGLE IN THE CHURCH

out in the world." He hid his face in his hands.

The incident closed the talk for the night, but the next morning as George was leaving the house Lettie followed him to the door. "George, I have the address of that fortune teller. Why not try it, anyway?"

"I am desperate enough to do anything, but this seems so simple."

"I want you to try this, George. I cannot tell why, but I feel that something good will come of it. If I felt strong enough I would go myself."

George took the address. He pitied Lettie, and while he had no faith in the experiment, he felt he ought to go to please her. "All right, Lettie, I will go, but do not count too much on what she will say."

The address was in another part of the city and it was late in the afternoon before he arrived in the vicinity. The old church was silent and deserted. He thought he had made a mis-

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take until a passer-by, who knew the neighborhood, told him it was the place.

“Pound on the door hard enough,” he said, “and you’ll bring her. She’s always there.”

George profited by his advice and knocked loudly, but to no purpose. Now that he had reached the home of the reputed witch, his zeal became as great as Lettie’s, and he looked around to see if there was not some other way to gain entrance. It was almost a religion with Mother Ann (for it was at her door George was standing), never to allow a window to be opened in the lower part of the church. Hester had disregarded her custom when he had first arrived and had opened the window in the room where he had awaited the coming of his mother’s page, and had drawn back the heavy curtains. At his mother’s protest he had declared that he must have air, and Vivian’s entrance had cut off any further controversy.

George spied the open window and as it was even with the ground, he made bold to step

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through it and found himself in a scantily-furnished room. Finding no one here, he went through the doorway into the hall and then into the vestibule. Here he heard a wild clamor above. He took it for some performance of the woman he had come to interview, and sat on one of the lower steps of the stairs resolving to wait until she was ready to receive him. Then a woman's voice in an unmistakable cry of anguish rent the air, and he went up the stairs in great bounds. A woman with her back to him was, from her attitude, evidently blocking the door. Before she saw him he brushed her aside as if she were a feather and rushed into the room. And there he saw Jim Hester, braced against a pew, with a girl across his lap, his fingers around her throat, bending her head back until it was at the very point of breaking. A glance, as he rushed on, told George that the girl was Vivian. It was as if the fury of a thousand men were let loose when his arm shot out and Hester went

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toppling to the floor, like a piece of lead. George's arms went around Vivian and lifting her he cried hoarsely, "Are you hurt, Vivian? Are you hurt?"

"Not badly," she panted. "I do not think I am badly hurt, but take me out of here, George. Take me out quickly."

He did not stop to examine the inert form at his feet over which the old dame was wringing her hands, but catching Vivian up he hurried out into the street. There he halted a passing cab and an hour later when Lettie opened the door at the Simmons home to let him in she saw he had Vivian in his arms.

IN A CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP



## CHAPTER XXII

### IN A CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP

HAPPINESS pervaded the little home of the Simmonses. Lettie almost forgot her anxiety to find Tom, so relieved was she to have Vivian by her side again. The Admiral was almost beside himself with joy, and Mrs. Simmons shared this feeling with her good spouse. George Thorpe said little, but felt much. He knew he would never get over rejoicing that he had arrived at the fortune teller's at a time so critical. A moment more and it was likely Hester would have killed Vivian. As it was, beyond the mental strain to which she had been subjected, she was but little hurt. Again with her friends, she was rapidly getting over this.

A week had passed and no word had been

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heard of either Hester or his mother. Thorpe had left him in such a condition that he had not been able to follow them. Admiral Simmons was strong for calling on the law to deal with the fellow, but this would mean the bringing of Vivian to the front, and the probable result that Hester would learn where Lettie was, and so this course was abandoned. When the Admiral had pressed the matter, Lettie had said, "I have every reason in the world to keep clear of Jim Hester until we find Tom. Then I do not care how soon I meet him."

"Well," said the Admiral, "have your way, but it does seem pestilential to let a serpent like that wander around on the public highway."

The Admiral's mind, however, was taken up with a project that was interesting him much more than bringing Jim Hester to justice. He had not been able to summon courage to broach it to Vivian, or to any of her friends, but from the moment she was brought to his house by



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George Thorpe he was eaten up with eagerness to have her become a member of his stock company. It would be the glowing triumph of his managerial career to introduce to the public such an actress as he believed Vivian to be. How long he could have refrained from the subject without reaching the final point of tension it is impossible to say, but Vivian herself all unwittingly opened an avenue for him. George had returned to the island with messages from her to her parents. It was the first opportunity she had had safely to communicate with them, and a great burden was taken away when he had sailed for Mackinac.

George was to return the following week with news from home, and she would then know whether the folks there had heard some word of Tom. Her mind easier with these cares provided for, she turned to the problem of her future in the city. The Simmonses as well as Lettie had been souls of generosity in their treatment of her. This she appreciated to the

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full, at the same time feeling that now her strength had returned, she must be dependent on them no longer. So when Vivian, hoping there might be some position about the theater which she could fill, asked the Admiral for help and advice, he said, striving as he did so to conceal his delight, "You may begin just as soon as you wish. I've a place in the company for you."

"I did not mean that. I thought you might have some work behind the scenes or in the office. I was not thinking of acting."

"Aye, but I was. The stage is the only place in a theater for you. Why, my dear, you are an actress. That is written in your stars."

Vivian smiled. "I cannot quite believe that. It is so strange. You know, I have never been very brave, though the night I played Eliza I seemed to be caught up and carried on through the part in spite of myself. I fear I would not be equal to it again."

"I'm the one to worry about that," replied

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the Admiral. "If you join my company because I insist on it and then you fail, it will be my fault. Besides," he added diplomatically, "I'll give you a small part to begin with."

"If you really want me to, I will," she answered. "I must do something, and you have so much confidence in me you inspire a little in myself. Since I have always kept away from people it seems strange to be facing an audience. That other night, though, the footlights and the sea of faces I saw across them only seemed to encourage me, and it was just like a delightful dream."

"I tell you, girl, it is because you are a born actress. Why, you love those footlights just like a soldier loves the smell of powder or a sailor the whiff of the sea."

When Lettie was told that Vivian had consented to go on the stage again she agreed it was a wise plan. She would have been willing to have gone on indefinitely sharing her earnings with Vivian, but she had a premonition

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that her waning strength would not warrant her in doing so. She was also impressed with the Admiral's account of Vivian's acting the night she was sick in the lake town, especially as his enthusiasm was confirmed by other members of the company. It was decided that the name of the young actress should appear on the bills as Miss Vivian. It was believed this would be sufficient to conceal the knowledge of whom she really was from Hester if he chanced upon the advertisement. The name Vivian was not an unusual surname and would meet the requirements of the case.

Having come to an agreement the old actor forgot all about his promise to give Vivian "a small part to begin with." He had been planning a revival of "The Cricket on the Hearth," in which he was to play Caleb Plummer, and Vivian was promptly cast for the part of Bertha, his blind daughter. Mrs. Simmons was to appear as Mrs. Fielding and Lettie as May. While it was the custom for the stock company

## IN A CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP

to revive some old play each week, when a production met with more than usual favor it was continued for two and three weeks and sometimes longer if the interest of the public warranted it. The Admiral was delighted with the rehearsals and declared, "We'll catch them with this. It is going to be a record breaker."

Vivian approached her part with considerable timidity, which lessened as she grew familiar with it and with the other members of the company, several of whom were new to her; for the Admiral had recognized the need of a stronger and better cast in the city than he carried with him on his barn-storming tours. The character of Bertha was well suited to her soft and gentle manner, and though she went through her part at the rehearsals very quietly, all the members of the cast agreed that she would give a satisfactory performance. When the Admiral heard his fellow players talking in this way, he said little, but smiling to him-

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self he would inwardly observe: "When the curtain swings up and the inspiration of the audience gets to working, that girl is going to surprise the natives."

THE PLAYER GIRL





## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE PLAYER GIRL

WHEN George Thorpe returned from the island and found that Vivian was about to make her *début* at the Admiral's theater, he was nonplused. One of the things he had been anxious to see her parents about was their willingness to have him make the island girl his wife, and having received their approval he had come back with hope battling with fear in his heart to make his appeal. George did not know whether or not Vivian loved him. He had known for years that next to Tom he was closer to her heart than any other young man she knew, but she had met so few and her world had been so small that this gave him no great confidence. Recently, since trouble had come so heavily upon her and her people, he

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realized she was drawn closer to him than ever, though whether this was a strengthening of the old sisterly affection or something deeper he could not be sure. His heart had swelled with the thought of all the hardships and sorrows she had passed through, and he longed to take her in his arms and shelter her henceforth from the ruder blasts of life's storm.

It was for this reason that he was disappointed when he found that Vivian was to appear on the stage. The stories the Simmonses had told him, as well as the other members of the company who had seen Vivian in the part of Eliza, had convinced him that she was gifted with unusual histrionic talent, and this he, knowing full well her sweetness and winsome ways, could easily believe. His love for Vivian was too unselfish to make him wish to stand in her way if she could go out to a career of usefulness and greatness, but he was disappointed none the less.

The news George brought from the island

## THE PLAYER GIRL

was very comforting to Vivian, for she learned that her parents were well and that affairs at home were happier than they had been for many a day, now that they knew their daughter was safe and well. The crushing sorrows of the year had told on them, but George had brought them hope and confidence that after all there might be brighter days on ahead.

Both of the old folks had sent word by him to Vivian that they would be made very happy if she confided herself to his care, but this part of his message George did not deliver when he found the turn that Vivian's path had taken while he was absent. He resolved to content himself a while longer, worshiping from afar. If events warranted it he would declare himself later.

If George had been lacking in consideration, it may have been that he would have found his prospects with Vivian better than he dared hope. It was entirely foreign to her, to allow

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

any man to see first the feelings of her heart. Whether she loved George was a question she had never put to herself, or even thought of in definite form. All his goodness and loyalty had planted in the garden of her affections seeds that even the slightest awakening might germinate into love. The awakening might have come if George had brushed aside all thoughts except those of his own happiness, and have pressed his cause. He was too unselfish to do this, unless he first was sure that Vivian's promise of artistic success would not mean more to her, than his devotion.

The opening night for the "Cricket on the Hearth" came and the theater was crowded as it was to be for many a night after. How familiar to all the world is the story of Caleb Plummer, the gray old toy maker, and his blind daughter, Bertha. The story of his all-absorbing love for her and how he deceived her, believing she would be happier if she thought the little cracked nutshell of a house was an enchanted home with gay colors on the walls

## THE PLAYER GIRL

and shining wood in the beams and panels,—believing that he, her father, was still young and handsome with his coat of bright blue,—believing that Tackleton, old Caleb's employer, ill-natured and exacting, was the guardian angel of their lives, his harsh words being but jests to make them merry. The story of how Bertha came to love the Tackleton her poor old father painted for her, and how she became nearly heart-broken when she found he was to marry May Fielding, compelling her father to tell her the truth of how he had misled her to make her happier.

The curtain rose and soon old Caleb was on the stage with his, "Good evening, John. Good evening, mum. Good evening, Tilly. Good evening, unbeknown. How's baby, mum? Boxer's pretty well, I hope."

The Admiral had played this part before and he was a prime favorite in it with his clientele. They had laughed and wept with him as the goodness of the humble toy maker and his ten-

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derness for his blind daughter became as vivid as life to them.

Bertha does not appear until the second act. As the curtain rises, old Caleb is seen working on a toy house, while he soliloquizes over his growing weakness and age and his fear that Bertha will discover it. A door swings back and Vivian appears. With the uncertain step of the blind she crosses the stage. Caleb meets her. This is a new member of the company the audience has never seen before. Her face, fresh and bright, her golden hair, her grace so charming catches them at once. They wish her eyes were open. They would like to see them.

And then they listen; she speaks, her voice like a soft silvery bell, and as they hear her, "Father, so you were out in the rain last night in your beautiful new great coat," they are bewitched. Nor is it by the actress, but by the blind girl. Vivian has become Bertha and has sunk all of herself into the soul of the girl who cannot see. And the girl has become at once

## THE PLAYER GIRL

so lovable, so delicate, so pathetic that Caleb has not read half his line before the low murmur that gathers force from parquet to gallery bursts in loud applause. A moment later when she cries out her delight as she pictures how her father must look in that blue coat—that bright blue coat—all the house joins in her merriment and makes the rafters ring, and then when so tenderly, so very tenderly, she tells of the little plant beside her pillow as she sleeps and how she turns it to the sun in the morning, they weep with her and are ready to curse Tackleton for his hard and wicked spirit. And so the evening swept along, until the long-lost brother returns at last from the golden South Americas, and the good are blessed and made happy, the wrongs repented and all are as merry as the wedding bells that are ringing so gayly.

The play is over, the plaudits have ceased, and the audience is streaming through the aisles into the streets. As they pass, George

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Thorpe stands to one side and hears their comments and from all there is but one theme;—the beauty and the grace of the girl actress who had that night made for them a picture of the great novelist's Bertha so delightful and so precious that they were never to forget it. He shares their pleasure with them, though sorrow tugs at his heart; for it seems to him that Vivian is farther away from him than ever.



THE PLAY'S CLIMAX



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE PLAY'S CLIMAX

THERE is no telling how long "The Cricket on the Hearth" would have run its course at the theater if the ever versatile Admiral had not become possessed with another idea. After the first night the theater was thronged with the crowds that were anxious to see the new star that had come athwart the dramatic sky. The critics of the metropolitan dailies came hurrying to the Admiral's unpretentious play-house to view this new-risen light, and they were as fulsome in their praises as the most undiscerning patron of the drama, who judges with his emotions, rather than his mind, could wish. Managers, too, came scurrying from everywhere, and their advent began to be followed by offers so pregnant with prom-

## VIVIAN OF MACKINAC

ises of riches and fame that even the Admiral advised Vivian that these could do better by her than he could, but she steadfastly refused them all. It was about this time that he determined that before the season closed she should appear as Juliet. He said nothing of this at first, being content with the present prosperity that had come to his house and also because he had no member of his present company to whom he was willing to intrust the part of Romeo. While he was thus turning the matter over in his mind, he met an old theatrical acquaintance whose home was in Denver, but who was on a brief visit to Chicago. His old friend had seen Vivian and as he waxed eloquent in his eulogy of her the Admiral revealed his purpose to him, and lamented his lack of a Romeo.

“Why, I can tell you of a Romeo that you can get. He has been playing all the spring at a Denver theater,” his friend broke in. “He is a new man evidently, but one of the best romantic actors we have had in our part of the

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country. He is handsome, superbly built, and has a voice full of melody. He will make you a Romeo that will match Miss Vivian to a T."

"Who is he?" asked the Admiral, getting interested.

"His name is Vincent Strong. He was playing with some road company, the rankest kind of barn-stormers, too, when one of our Denver managers picked him up and he has proved a jewel."

The Admiral commissioned his friend to engage the western prodigy for the part of Romeo, if possible, and then he returned home full of his project.

If Vivian had grown up with the stage and had an inkling of its traditions, she would have suffered the fear and trembling with which experienced actresses approach the part of Juliet, but she was innocent of all this. She had drawn heavily from the Admiral's wealth of stage craft and was ready to take his word in all matters of the mimic world. So she

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commenced under his instruction to study and learn the part of Juliet. It was not long before she realized the deep note the immortal bard had struck when he limned the character of the pure and noble Juliet. Here was truly the ideal of glorious womanhood. Vivian loved the daughter of the Capulets at once and threw her heart and soul into a study of romance's fancy. The Admiral was ever at her elbow with suggestion or criticism and long before the date was set for the first rehearsal she was well versed in her part. Then came the word that Vincent Strong would come and play Romeo.

The date for the opening night was announced, the advertisements were spread and the company commenced rehearsals in earnest. The actor from the West did not appear at the first rehearsals and later it was found that he could not obtain a release from his Denver manager in time to be at rehearsals at all. Telegrams and letters passed each other

## THE PLAY'S CLIMAX

swiftly, but the western manager was obdurate and the disgusted Admiral finally decided that Strong would have to get along with the dress-rehearsal, which was to take place the afternoon of the evening which would witness the first performance. Strong had played Romeo for several weeks quite recently and would be prepared for the part. But this was not to be all the trouble. The last afternoon came and with it a telegram from Strong. His train had been delayed and would not arrive in Chicago until nine o'clock that night. The seats were sold out and the gallery gods were even now gathering in line at the entrance to the gallery, so anxious were they for choice positions to view what an eavesdropper might have heard them declare was going to be an event in the theatrical world. To await the arrival of the actor meant to delay the play, and this the veteran manager did not want to do. "We might wait an hour," he declared, "and then the infernal train would be late and we would

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be everlastingly dished. But in the name of holy Jerusalem, what shall we do?"

Vivian was quick to meet the situation. "Let someone double for the first act. Mr. Strong will be here in time for the second."

"The very thing if we have the man," cried the Admiral. "Is there a Romeo here?"

The actor who was cast for Friar Laurence declared that in his younger years he had played the part, though now the lines were scarcely in his memory.

"That is nothing," cried the Admiral, "you can learn the part for the first act between now and night easily, and with a youngish wig you will make a gallant Romeo. Vivian," and he made a sweeping bow to her, "I knew, my dear, you were an actress down to the marrow, but this is my first introduction to you as a stage manager. You are a wonder."

A telegram was forwarded to Strong, telling him of the arrangement. A carriage was to meet him at the train to carry him from station



## THE PLAY'S CLIMAX

to footlights with all speed. The Admiral even urged him to get into the baggage car and open his trunks and dress his part there, if possible.

The first act of the play went off smoothly enough. The Admiral had made a little speech before the curtain ascended, explaining to the audience the predicament and begging their indulgence, which they were feeling too good-humored to refuse and, in truth, so kindly that the temporary Romeo was given a hand that made him blush with pleasure. A telephone message to the Admiral told him that Strong was on his way to the theater in a carriage, costumed and ready to step on the stage the moment he passed through the stage door.

In a box somewhat back and in the shadow so that their presence might not distract their beloved friend, sat George Thorpe and Lettie, eager for the second act. In the arrangement of the play, this was the balcony scene of Shakespeare's incomparable offering to the

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shrine of lovers of all future ages. Lettie had been cast for the part of Lady Capulet, but her strength had so worn away that a week before she had had to give way to someone else. Tonight she felt stronger than she had for weeks. Though the corner of the box where she sat was dark, George could see the gleaming fire in her eyes.

Behind the scenes, the Admiral waited at the stage entrance until a carriage drove up. "He's here," he shouted, "ring up the curtain." Up, up it went, and Capulet's orchard lay spread before the spectators, and from a balcony window they caught now and then glimpses of Juliet as she hovered near the casing. And then Romeo entered. Vivian peered down through the lattice work of her window to see the newcomer and to hear his words. Deep and resonant sound the lines, "He jests at scars who never felt a wound." It was the face and the voice of her brother Tom.

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George and Lettie in their box start up. It is their friend. It is the long-lost Tom. It is with difficulty they restrain themselves. He, all unconscious of the nearness of his loved ones, continues his rhapsody. Vivian above him in her balcony holds her beating heart and represses the rapturing cries that are choking in her throat. "Tom, Tom, Tom," she can scarcely keep them still. In a moment she must speak, and what will she do then? What will her brother do? Mrs. Simmons, who is playing the part of nurse and who is at her side, observes her agitation and thinking it comes from the excitement of the stage, tries to soothe her. Meanwhile below comes clear and musically the words,

"Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.  
What if her eyes were theirs, they in her  
head?"

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The brightness of her cheek would shame those  
stars,  
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so  
bright  
That birds would sing and think it were not  
night.  
See, how she—”

He had reached these words when a figure  
strange to the play of “Romeo and Juliet”  
sprang upon the stage and cried, “He is a mur-  
derer, arrest him!”

The intruder was Jim Hester.

THE SKEIN UNTANGLED



## CHAPTER XXV

### THE SKEIN UNTANGLED

THE audience was in an uproar. It was evident even to those unfamiliar with the play that this man in modern garb was not part of it. He must be a lunatic, and many feared for the safety of the actor, whose appearance and voice, though he had scarcely uttered a dozen lines, had won instant favor with them. Two officers had been standing at the door and no sooner had the supposed madman appeared than they started forward and were over the footlights and upon the stage before the curtain came swinging down in answer to the command of the Admiral, who was almost beside himself at the intrusion.

Tom stood as transfixed at the appearance of Hester. He had hesitated when the

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Chicago engagement was offered him, for he felt it was a little closer to his old home than his safety warranted, but the opportunity had been so promising that he could not resist it, and scattering discretion to the winds, had come. And now at the very eve of his arrival fate had brought Hester to the theater and he stood disclosed.

As he stood, he felt soft arms circle about his neck and he found himself looking down into the face of Vivian, his sister.

“Vivian, you?” he ejaculated.

“Yes, Tom, dear Tom. Oh, I am glad to see you, but why did you come?”

In the meantime the officers with the assistance of the Admiral and half the company were trying to remove Hester from the stage, still believing him mad. But he had fortified himself on a raised elevation in the garden scene and with the drop at his back and a heavy piece of stage furniture in his hand he kept them at bay. “Listen to me, will you,”



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he shouted. "Listen to me. I tell you that man is not any Vincent Strong, as his name runs on your playbill. I recognized him the minute he set foot on the stage. He is Tom Summers and he is wanted for the murder of Louis Manette on Mackinac Island."

Still they believed him mad and still he iterated and reiterated his words, the meanwhile keeping them off by waving the garden stool which he held threateningly above his head. At last one of the officers, thinking to soothe the man turned to the actor, whose every attention seemed to be given to the Juliet of the play, and said, "Sir, is this true? Are you the Tom Summers wanted on Mackinac Island, charged with murder?"

Like a bombshell came the answer, "I am."

"Yes," shrieked Hester, "he murdered Louis Manette. I saw him with my own eyes."

"That is a lie, Jim Hester, and you know it."

Everybody turned to face the woman who

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had come rapidly through the wings and who with finger pointed straight at Hester had cried out the words.

“Lettie, Lettie,” he almost screamed, “you here?” and then almost pleadingly, “Lettie, do not make a fool of yourself. You know he killed your father.”

“I know, and you know, Jim Hester, that he did not, though he himself believes that he did,” came the reply in measured tones. “I killed my father myself.”

“You fool,” shrieked Hester, now mad with passion, “you have saved his neck, but you will lose your own.”

Tom stepped forward and taking Lettie’s hands, cried, “Lettie, what do you mean? I do not understand.”

“O Tom,” and she looked at him lovingly, “I have been praying for this so many days. With my own lips I have longed to lift from you the burden which was not yours and at

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last God has sent you in answer to my prayers.”

Then turning to the company now gathered around them, she said, “The day Tom Summers came to my home on the island to make peace with my father and ask his favor on his marriage to me, I had been in the barn and had been having an angry debate with my father. I had descended from the loft where he was and had thrown myself upon a bed of hay in the first story of the barn, weeping in my indignation and anger, when Tom passed through without seeing me and mounted to where my father was. He had scarcely done so when Jim Hester entered the barn and together we overheard the quarrel that resulted from my father’s implacable mood. When Tom threw my father back and he fell through the trap-door into the room below where we were, father was not injured, but sprang to his feet and with some mutterings of having the life of

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Tom he started again toward the ladder to make his way up to him. God forgive me, but I was so inflamed with his cruelty to me, and fearful that he would do some harm to Tom, that I sprang forward and seizing the pitchfork without considering, without realizing what I was doing, I stabbed him with it and he fell dead at my feet. Then Hester seized me by the arm and half dragged me out of the barn and back into the house. A moment later when Tom reached my father's side and found him dead, he naturally supposed that when he had fallen through the trapdoor he had fallen on the fork and met his death. I know from what his sister, Vivian, has told me that he thought the people would laugh at his story and would believe he had killed my father in a quarrel about me."

"You fool, Lettie, you fool," shrieked Hester again, and before anyone could stop him, he sprang forward and dealt the girl a blow with the garden stool, across the chest. The blood

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spurted from her mouth and she fell back into the arms of the Admiral.

The officers rushed upon him. He leaped backward in frightful plunges and went clean through the drop scene at his back. They heard him stumble and then there was a crushing sound. A trapdoor had given way when he had landed upon it with tremendous force and he fell through; as it sprang back into place with lightning speed it caught his neck and broke it as quickly and as neatly as if it had been the gallows it should have been.

They carried Lettie to a greenroom and a physician was summoned from the audience, now dismissed without their cherished pleasure. When he reached her side he shook his head, and whispered to her friends as they gathered round, "She may live an hour, but no longer."

Lettie opened her eyes. "Send for someone to take my oath," she whispered, "I am willing to go and leave it all, but I must live

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long enough to clear Tom, my beloved Tom," and she looked at him so fondly that he sank on his knees beside her couch and buried his face in his hands. A notary came and Tom urged her to let the matter rest, not to disturb her last moments with thoughts of him.

"Ah, but, Tom, my love," she fondly whispered, "if you want me to die happy, if you really want me to be undisturbed, let me have my way. I must know that you are safe, and then I am willing to go."

And so she had her way. The deposition was taken; she weakly scrawled her name across its page, and when she saw a sufficient number of witnesses had signed it, she smiled happily and said, "God has been very good to me, very good. I have wanted to see you so much, Tom, and now to have you here, to feel your arms around me, to hear you whisper in my ear, to have Vivian here, and the dear Admiral and his wife, and George,—it makes me supremely happy.

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“And, Tom,” she whispered as her breath grew shorter, “Tom, I believe the gates of Paradise are ajar. I know God has forgiven me my wrong. I have wept it out before Him, prostrate in the dark hours of the night, oh, so many times, and because He is merciful I know He has forgiven me.”

It was very hard to give up this quiet, reliant, brave girl. Each of those about her had been drawn very close to her in the past months. To the Admiral and his wife, she had been like a daughter; to George Thorpe, she was a dear friend and sister; to Vivian, she had been an angel of protection, as well as her good genius; to Tom, who had found her, only to lose her, she was all that a woman could be to a man. His tenderness and care for her, in these moments was a comfort beyond words. She looked her gratitude, speaking it as long as she could, and when speech failed her, and the inevitable moment was at hand, her eyes told them that she wished them near.

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They gathered closer, the tears flowing unrestrained, and then she started up and cried, "I see them, the green fields and the still waters," and then sank back and spoke no more.



BACK TO THE ISLAND



## CHAPTER XXVI

### BACK TO THE ISLAND

**I**N a little lot at Rosehill, loved and tended by the Admiral and his wife because their only child lay sleeping there, Lettie was laid away. The passionate, strong-willed girl of the Canadian hills was gone from earth forever, but those who knew her best were to carry her memory through the long years, and to cherish it as a dear possession.

When the funeral was over the thoughts of the little group from the island turned homeward. In their sorrow a peaceful calm came to their hearts. They were free to go home. The island home of their youth was open to them and none could say them nay. They remained with the Admiral and his wife for a few days, whose sorrow was too great to let them

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all go immediately. They were interested in Tom's story of how strangely fate had acted in bringing him back to Vivian and to liberty. While in the West he had met with an itinerant theatrical company which was traveling from place to place giving performances in which both art and patronage were scant. A discouraged member of the aggregation had left them that day and this opportunity, poor as it was, Tom counted a godsend. He took to his new life so readily and excelled so quickly that a theatrical manager who by chance saw him act, gave him the engagement in Denver, where he had won his spurs.

The day they said good-by to the Admiral's home, the good old man said very gently as they were gathered about his board for the last time, "Vivian, my dear girl, all our hearts have been too full for me to speak to you before, but before you go, and here in the presence of our friends, I want to ask you whether you intend to remain on the island or shall you return

## BACK TO THE ISLAND

to the stage? I speak of this because, my dear, you have great talent, very great talent, and I fain would not see it lost to the world. In my little theater I cannot give you the opportunity that you deserve, but I know that great managers are ready to do this, and if you accept there is everything that life has to give before you, riches, fame and a glorious career."

"My dear Admiral," spoke George Thorpe, "I will answer for Vivian if I may, for she has promised to be my wife," and he smiled happily at her. "She has foreseen some such proffer as this, but neither she nor I care for these things which the world sets so great a value upon. Yonder in the straits is a little island we love, there is our home and there we will live our lives, quietly and, God grant, usefully. We were all happier there than we have been in the great wide world and we are going back there to find our lost happiness."

It was the second morning after and Vivian stood in the prow of a great, white steamer

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that was plunging its nose through the northern waters of old Michigan. Since dawn she had stood there and looked ever ahead through the dashing spray, as the beautiful craft which bore her drew nearer and nearer every moment to the little island in the straits. She would soon see it now. The sun as it rose had driven every cloud out of the sky, and its azure was as clear and as lovely as the eyes of the girl that swept it with the same raptures that many a happy day ago she had scanned it from her cliff.

The craft pressed on through the silent waters. Vivian, the only one who has ventured to rise with the light of coming day, awaits alone the first sight of the gem of the inland sea. When yonder point is turned it will be in view. Nearer and nearer, her heart almost leaping in her breast with joy;—ah, there it is resting on the waters, the sun kissing its crested hill tops, the waves dashing against the foot of its green cliffs, the everlasting blue at

## BACK TO THE ISLAND

its feet, circling it in all its glory of old. On yonder beach her loved ones await her, on yonder island top is the sweet old home, and above yonder waters, raising its head as proudly as of yore, is her cliff. No more is she the wandering girl in the great, unknown world, but again and forevermore she is Vivian of Mackinac.

THE END

















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